
KOVENANT

Covenant by reddogf.13

Category: IT
Genre: Horror, Mystery
Language: English
Status: Completed
Published: 2019-07-29 16:52:56
Updated: 2019-08-22 08:23:54
Packaged: 2019-12-12 05:20:07
Rating: M
Chapters: 13
Words: 39,996
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Summary: They did it, IT was left to die alone in the tunnels under Derry. months have passed and the losers thrived after what seems to feel like a curse lifting off the town. if only Beverly had not decided to make a last minute deal with IT on its death bed. will her choice to let IT live destroy all that she holds dear?

1. Do we have a deal?

After all they'd been through. What the clown put them through. They were all on the brink of finishing it. Hit after hit avoiding the chomping, drooling, jaws of *IT*. The twisted forms it made to desperately scare them back. The losers club had it surrounded in a circle ready to attack as it spat out the ridged iron bar Beverly had shoved down its throat.

It was beaten down ragged. Seemingly have nothing left to throw at the children. They thought *IT* was finished. *IT* had to retreat if it wanted to live and must know that, but they were wrong.

IT hissed and wheezed before letting out a deep inhuman growl. *ITs* body growing in loud cracks with the silver clown costume shredding apart to fall in bits to the floor. The while skin turning to hardened scales. Multiple fiery glowing eyes appearing with twisted otherworldly pupils. Jaws stretching to multiple rows extending out. Stretching itself out to sprout more and more limbs upon its body.

The losers returned to each others side at *ITs* growing length. Avoiding the possibility of being separated by its long sharp scaled tail ending in a pair of crushing pincers.

IT laughed at the covering losers under its 15ft foot height. 8 fiery glowing eyes staring down into their very souls. Below them was a large grin of jagged teeth layered up inside its long snout. Its red mouth marking remaining along its lips to cross by a pair of its eyes. Hard jagged layered scales circling at its neck resembling the once ruffled lace collar.

"aww, what's wrong?" *IT* laughed down to the small prey in a deep echoing booming voice. Sounding as if two voices were speaking. a low pitch and a high pitch warping together as one.

Stretching a wide grin of uneven drool dripping teeth."not having fun anymore?" stepping closer on long slender spider limbs. Followed by the multiple crawling centipede ones tapping at the stone floor. Stopping to let out a snarling wheeze over them all. A wave of its rotten breath hitting them into wincing away for a moment.

One that *IT* took its chance on. Lunging its wide jaws at them in a deafening roar. Missing all of them leaping out of the way to safety. *IT* smashing right into a large wall so hard it crack off the concrete. Chunks falling off the broken wall to collect at the floor in piles. *IT* letting out a groaning growl to shake off the concrete crumbling over it. Turning to face the losers now attempting to beat it down again with no success. *IT*s new scaled hide being far too tough to be messed by all the losers weapons. They may as well have been ants beating a armored tank with what little harm they caused.

IT lunged toward Bill, who was the closest, with a loud snap of its jaws missing their fleeing target. Hissing out a wheeze toward the reassembling group. *ITs* once confident gate now struggling to shift itself around. Heavily breathing toward them as if its lungs had popped under all the stress. The powerful movements of its tail turning into an unhelpful weight on struggling legs.

"who's wheezing now clown?!" Eddie shouted from within the losers close group. "Wished you had an inhaler now, don't cha!"

The large otherworldly creature hissing aggressively into a forward step toward them. Limbs shaking to finally collapse entirely onto the stone. The losers all watching it carefully for any possible tricks. *IT* hissing and growling from its spot. Jaws threateningly agape toward the group caught by mike as hiding something else.

"i think *ITs* dying." mike whispered to the group. Bill glancing over his shoulder to him.

"how do you know?" asking without fully taking his eyes off *IT*.

"we had to hunt coyotes on the farm that were killing sheep. they would act just like this when cornered, desperate, at the end of their rope in traps. Mouth wide open, lots of snapping and noises to try and get us to leave them alone. They couldn't even move when we found them like that. I think *ITs* used up the last of its energy." explaining similar situations on their family farm.

"what if it's a trick?" skeptical of the massive creature known for hiding its true self.

Ben spoke up. "what can we do if its not? None of our hits are doing anything. Not even a dent."

Stanley spoke up next. "i am not staying down here for hours to **maybe** watch *IT* die. I definitely won't be coming back once we leave." fidgeting to fix his ruffled clothes.

"this might do it!" Richie shouted in flinging his bat flying to smack against *ITs* face. Bouncing off to land not too far off to *ITs* side. *IT* letting out a growl and nothing more at the attack. Richie stepping away from the group despite protests. Arms pulled off his shirt with a hop away from the others concerned reach.

The losers watching him slowly approach it. Beverly breaking off soon after to follow right behind him. Walking by under *ITs* glaring eyes right up to the thrown bat. Richie firmly taking the leather wrapped metal handle into hand.

IT lunging toward them scaring them back a few steps. Stopping at realizing *IT* was unable to get a full on lunge. More of a quick snap toward the air in front of them. Nowhere near close to actually reaching them. The two calmly walking back to rejoin the group in full confidence mike was right.

" *IT* can't do anything." Beverly announcing to both the losers and *IT*. Bill nodding to them all that they had reached their goal of finishing it, for the most part.

"so what do we do with *IT?"* mike looking to bill for an answer.

"like Ben said. N-n-nothing we can do if we can't hurt it now. We leave, wait *IT* out, till it starves." speaking the last part louder toward the struggling creature working on just breathing.

"we'll all – most of us will come and c-c-check later to see if its died yet." speaking to the group. They all gave it one last glare as they walked toward the exit.

IT wheezed in a huge breath to snarl. "where are you all going?! Too afraid to face me?! I'll come back! I'll devour you all! You're all meat ready to be devoured!" *IT* roared after them from its fallen place.

Even far down the tunnels the losers could hear its struggled wheezing for air.

Eddie took a deep breath of air once outside the drainage pipe. "finally, fresh air!" faceing with arms raised toward the warm inviting sun.

"you said it." Stan agreed. Taking up some river water to wash *ITs* slimy drool off his face.

"welp, there goes all of our summer! Fuckin here comes school! We should go back and demand that clown to refund our summer!" Richie shouted. Everyone slouching for a moment at the reminder of school. As if they haven't have been through enough stress.

"hopefully I'll still be going to school." Beverly mumbled.

"why? Are you running away?" Ben asking her bringing the attention of everyone else on her.

"i might have to or else I might be heading to juvenile hall. Before *IT* grabbed me I got into a fight with my dad. Bashed his head in with the toilet cover. I don't know If he's alive or not."

"we can help hide you." bill offered.

"where?! In the haystacks of mike's barn?!" Richie exclaimed. Getting a glare from bill.

"no, I plan to call my aunt who lives in the RV park. I think she'll help." swallowing nervously at the thought of what she would even say.

"i also gotta get back to my mom. She must be freaking out since I ran off to help. I'll be lucky if there aren't cops at my house." Eddie panicked. Shuffling out his inhaler for a breath of medication.

"go home and update later?" bill looked to everyone. Getting nods mixed with yes's. Everyone splitting off in their own way home.

The remaining vacation days sped by for them all. After the battle with *IT* the losers discovered Henry had survived with some massive

mental trauma. Being found around the many dead bodies of other children washed out of the sewers. Arrested on the spot to be later put on trial for all the murders *IT* had done that summer. His case eventually settled on him being mentally unfit. Sent off to be held in a mental hospital for life.

Beverly, after calling her aunt for help, was investigated by police. Opening up a whole different case with CPS at hearing her reasons of defense. Unfortunately, upon investigation of the house her father was missing. The police having no luck in finding his whereabouts either. Setting out a warrant for him to be arrested on sight to be brought in for questioning. After everything was as settled as it could be, Beverly was placed in her aunts care.

Eddie of course was grounded for forever by his mother or until he moved out. Richie helping to bring Eddie news from the outside world. Convincing him now and again to sneak out. Ben, bill, and Stan helping as well by bringing snacks he wasn't allowed. All playing together or walking the long trip over to Beverly's new home. Where she seemed much happier to be.

School had started up again for them all. Freely hanging out with each other now on the grounds. No worries of the bowers gang spotting them. Things were looking much brighter and *IT* being almost completely forgotten. The traumas they all faced seeming to be healing on their own while days passed.

All except for Beverlys.

Her problems had stayed open wounds, always had been. The boys feared the clown, who was now gone. Her father and those horrible rumors still haunted her. Still being reminded she was the school slut by Greta Keene on a daily basis. The richest girl in Derry who mocked all the losers, because they weren't like her. Kids whose families didn't have a penny to their name. Throwing trash onto Beverly in the bathroom. Being so cruel as to write loser across Eddies cast. Beverly caught her cruel attention the most out of the group. Spreading rumors to every boy she could that Beverly was an easy lay.

The guys trying their best to help her over these rumors, but there

was only so much they could do. Further rumors starting up of why she was friends with all the guys. After some kid talked about seeing them all exiting the sewers after that big fight with *IT*. Greta took her chance to spread a really nasty rumor. Claiming that Beverly had, had an orgy with them all down there. Beverly's problems were all rooted in everyday life, not from the clowns involvement. She overcame *IT,* but was he really an obstacle for her?

She was never afraid of *IT*, never afraid to rush in and face *IT*. To face death itself no matter how painful it could be. Maybe this is why she wanted to build things up instead of tearing them down. To leave something behind and be remembered for something greater than "the town slut."

for now she held nothing more than a high grade record. Taking it all day by day without much further thought to it.

Until one sunny bright day, on the 18th of September.

walking her way home from school she looked down at a childs chalk drawing of a turtle colored across the sidewalk. The child chalk art stretching up the bridges wood railing as sketches of kelp. Surrounded in brightly colored various fish. Having her gaze lead to the flowing river below. Reminding her of the water drain which then reminded her of *IT*.

"none of us have checked in for a few months. It has to be dead by now." thinking as she looked at the running water. some part of her urging her to go check without giving a second thought to the danger she was walking in on alone.

Scaling down the rocky hill from the bridge road. Walking along the rocky river shore under the shade of multiple branches. Stopping at the dark drainage pipe entrance to push aside thick grown over roots of trees. Carefully traversing the dark pipe maze to the center. Approaching out into the large clearing of *ITs* nest. The massive tower of junk mixed toys having toppled over at some point. Half the hoard scattered far across the stone. The large skylight above, now cleared of the blocking horde, was now gracing the room in a glowing light. Giving a less feeling of gloomy death lingering.

Noticing right away, more importantly, that *IT* had somehow moved from where it was to halfway be inside its nest. White scaled tail brightly lit under the falling sunlight. Blending past the run down wagons entrance into the darkness concealing the rest of *IT*. Concern hopping into the back of her mind on what else *IT* could have accomplished. Brushing it off at remembering how *ITs* condition was the last time. Being barely able to breath, stand, or move at all. How long exactly could it have taken *IT* to move over this measly space? A week, a month, or this entire time to get only this far in the nest?

Walking over as quiet as she could in listening for its breathing. Neither hearing or seeing its body move to inhale. Not even a twitch at her approach.

"dead?" thinking at the sight as she cautiously climbed up to the entrance. The back of the wagon pushed down to reveal the inner core of the pile. It was hallow all the way up to the top that now had light pooling in where the fallen half used to cover. Stopping herself from studying the pile she looked back down over the coiling insect body before her.

Tracking it's body to find it's head as quickly as possible. Finding the other half of its body twisting over to slip underneath the rotten wagon down into a hidden hole.

"didn't see this." peering down into the hole getting just enough light pooling in to see the outlined shape of *IT*. Mainly scanning where the head of him was resting. The bright red marking of *ITs* face almost a glowing beacon under light. Coiled up at the bottom on the half of its long body it managed to get down.

Scanning over the wall down she could see the rough wall was going down into an easily climbable slope. Taking a deep breath as she slipped down into the hole. Climbing down to the bottom to look over *IT* in absolute silence. Not daring to say anything as she did another scan over the still child eater.

Taking a moment of curiosity to study *ITs* features up close. The light grey skin covered in various splotches of darkening grey. The multiple centipede like legs bearing a dark purple color that could almost count as black. Praying mantis like arms having the same

color covered in dark forward facing spikes. One being spread to show itself as a hidden hand over a giant lone claw the other stayed as. Large long antennas on its head bearing an appearance to horns if only they weren't so limp against is head at the moment.

ITs snout having six nostrils resembling heat pits a large snake would have. Eyes were all closed, but a better description would be missing. Unable to see any eyelid seams where the eyes would open. Following the head was its white jagged scales lined in black down to its first pair of legs. That were then followed by 3 more pairs of lengthy spider legs totaling them up to 8. excluding all the smaller centipede legs lining down its body. Counting out a quick 19 from what she could see, possibly being three times that.

Reaching a hand out to touch the unmoving creature. Feeling its smooth scaled body before it lunged up to snap toward her without warning. Startling Beverly back into standing away from *IT*. watching its eyes appear through opening seams that certainly weren't there before. aiming the glowing gaze of each eye toward her in a wheeze. Clacking its jaws together in some threatening show that it could still bite.

"what are you doing here?!" *IT* hissed. "come to finish the job? Or to mock me on my deathbed?!" wheezing afterwards.

Beverly thought about not answering at first. "No." Simply answering the creature. Despite what *IT* did, She didn't come to kick *IT* while it was down. Not feeling herself to be so cruel despite knowing *IT* wouldn't do the same for her.

Bearing its teeth in opening its jaws a little wider showing off that burning orange light seeping from its throat. Beverly looked away from the burning light, even if it was barely enough to glow she could still feel a harsh heat off it. She wasn't taking the risk of being under the dead lights effects a 2nd time.

"then piss off!" hissing aggressively at her. She sighed in ignoring it's aggressive attitude. Looking up from where she came from.

Gazing back down at the whole room like area with a question coming to mind. "Why is this here?"

"... Did you just make this for your grave?" Asking the hissing bug laying not too far.

"No! Not while you keep disturbing me! Got nothing better to do then gawk at me? Go fuck off and choke on a cock!" Snapping at her in more aggressive vulgar language. Not phasing Beverly as she had heard it all. Every insult possible about her being a whore in some way.

Brushing off the insult to think over this area again. "*IT* wouldn't have enough energy to make this. It must be old, but why build it? Seems unnecessary with all the tunnels to hide in. then there's the, what used to be, huge tower of things."

"The walls must be *very* fascinating. Gonna fuck them too?" Hissing at her in a tone building more irritated each time.

"What's this room for?" Outright asking.

"None of your snot nosed business cock sucker!" Roaring at her now as Beverly expressed further interest in the hidden room.

"Hiding something." Confirming to herself in thought. Walking around in exploring the area making *IT* even more agitated. Snapping at the air in an empty threat of clacking teeth. Body twitching in trying to move at least a little. Letting out another deep hiss that turned into a weak wheeze for air. Staring Beverly down as she headed toward a particular area.

Approaching the area had her wincing under a rotten stench. Anxious that *IT* possibly had a hidden stash of rotten food down here she pushed forward. Noticing *ITs* furthering agitated behavior when she did. Coming up around to a small crevice in the wall where the scent was most strong. Looking inside to see weird looking globs clustered together in light webbing. Reaching to grab one for a closer look had her stopped by *IT* screeching.

"DON'T TOUCH THEM!" The loud shriek requiring all of the air in *ITs* lungs. Wheezing deeply following the massive outburst.

Looking from *IT* back toward the orbs. Only looking at them closer

instead of touching. Figuring out from it's reaction that they had to be eggs, but none of them looked well.

Parts of the clutch shriveled up like grapes from what used to be a smooth teardrop shape. from what Beverly guessed by other, more full, leaking eggs. Almost all of them split open in some way to leak a thick green slime. The source of the rotting smell that flowed all down to the floor in a disgusting sticky pool. After accidentally stepping into the slime she winced while moving away. The rotten muck stretched off the bottom of her moving shoe.

"Are they ... all gone?" Asking *IT* at the sight of them. Doing her best to be somewhat considerate of asking if they were dead.

"All because of you filthy brats!" Wheezing after still not having caught up on air. "You ruined my hunts! I couldn't feed them! I should have finished you all off in that house! Have them feast on your pathetic skins!" Ranting at her with a look of wanting to say a lot more, but didn't have the air to.

It would be a lie for Beverly to say she didn't feel bad. Unintentionally killing all of *ITs* kids, but then again who knows how they would have turned out. Their hatching leading to the devouring of children spiking to extremes. Spreading to other towns nearby like a plague. Perhaps, like people, they could have also developed their own personalities not based on their … *mothers?* No way of possibly knowing now.

A twinge of guilt increasing at connecting the fact *IT* had crawled over to die next to it's already dead brood. Did it all really have to end this way? Could something be changed for the sake of everyone's future?

"I am sorry." She apologized.

"Sorry?! You little fuckers will be sorry!" Roaring again on what little air it wheezed in.

" … Yelling won't change anything. ... Do you want help?" Watching it huff over her question.

" help?! What help are you?! Why bother helping me at all?!" Questioning her as if the offering was a trap. "you can help me by feeding me your limbs!"

"I am tired, i am sure Derry is tired, of all the deaths around here. So, maybe, we can make a deal?" Getting another wheezing huff from *IT* as if insulted

"Make a deal with you?! Gawh! Little worm! Are you so pea brained?! Make a deal with you? Hah! What a funny joke you've made! Why should i?! You don't know whom you speak to! *I am an **eater of worlds!*** A living nightmare that will never go away! I will devour you all like the pathetic prey you are! And you assume you are on the same step as me to offer any sort of deal?!" Laughing through a grin of jagged teeth.

"You were desperate enough to try making a deal over bill's life. I ain't the one on death's door laughing about being all powerful while having a wheeze ten times worse than Eddies." Scoffing back at *ITs* mightier than thou attitude. Dropping the mighty grin off *ITs* face to growl through its bared teeth.

"*why?*" hissing at her. "why make deals? The universe made us to be enemies. It would be moronic of you to spare the one to cause your end." a confused tone under all its wheezing.

"... a chance to change something for the better?" shrugging her shoulders slightly. "have something go right in Derry for once. Willing to be the one to take a chance. You don't want to die. Take your pick of reasons." she being not so sure herself on why. Only going off her inner will to make things better somehow.

"Do you want a deal or not? I won't come back for any answer after i leave today." Tone serious on her threat. *ITs* many eyes slowly closing to disappear one by one into its head. Not answering her as it contemplated.

"What's the deal?" *IT* mumbled out, barely understandable. Beverly giving her own pause of contemplation.

-

the story is already complete. i am just uploading it slowly to save suspense. :V

2. The Covenant

"You can't eat kids for one." Earning the expected hissy fit from *IT*.

"May as well leave me to die. I'll be starving either way!" Growling at the first condition. "I'll have you know i can't eat the meat you do. It always has to be *someone* that feeds my hunger."

her next condition came to her quickly. A part of her thinking that this could count as *IT serving* a debt to society."You can only eat criminals. Robbers, murderers, kidnappers, those kinds of people." Ignoring all of *ITs* complaining as she went on.

"What about all of you?! Why am i only getting restraints from this deal?!" Hissing up another fit.

" as long as you don't eat innocent people. We promise not to bother you or interfere in your hunts. Okay?" Wondering if this was even getting anywhere or merely wasting her time speaking to *IT*.

"What if there are no criminals? What if i have eaten them all? What if they all leave? Am i supposed to starve until one *possibly* enters Derry?!" Questioning her. Bringing up a highly probable situation they could be hit with.

After thinking it over multiple times with no other possibilities. She took in a deep breath to say the 4th condition. " … We'll choose for you if there are no options." Thinking of it being best rather then *IT* having a free for all on options.

Continuing onto list all the condition. " you can only kill criminals. You can't kill kids. We won't do anything to hurt you unless you break the deal. If there's no food, we'll find you someone. Do we have a deal?" Asking for the final confirmation. Hearing it grumble before begrudgingly accepting.

"i accept, but You'll have to uphold your last ruling first. I cannot hunt so you'll have to do it for me." Going on to grumble barely hearable about "humans can't catch anything. … Going to starve … Stupid."

"I'll try to bring … Someone. I need time to think of a plan first." Swallowing at the idea of picking someone to lure to their death to *ITs* jaws. *ITs* frown twisting up into a crooked grin at the thought of possibly being served by a little human. That then dropped at hearing Beverly needing time.

"*Oooh please*, take your time. **I am in no hurry.**" Tone heavily oozing anger inside of sarcasm. Beverly turning to leave with a sigh. Climbing back up the sloped wall into the main nest area. Mixing her way back home between walking to running as to not make her aunt worry why she took so long.

"Oh Bev! I was beginning to wonder where you were." Her aunt spoke surprised as Beverly entered through the door.

"Sorry, i stopped to look at some chalk art by the river and lost track of time." Panting after running half the way home. Rummaging through the fridge to pour a glass of kool-aid before retreating to her small room.

"I am gonna do homework in my room." Telling her aunt before closing the narrow door. The space barely big enough for a bed with a narrow two foot wide walkway beside it. One wall having built in shelves and the other having a small shelf space under a full window. Atop her wall shelves were a small square TV, Many figures left after her mother's death. A few stuffed animals between other various toys. the space under her window holding all her school books piled upon work binders.

Decorating the small space was a small string of hung up Christmas lights at her ceiling. A small poster of the batman logo across her door. Framed photos of her and the guys or her with her aunt. Any remaining space on her wall slowly taken over by sketches of outfits. Since moving in with her aunt she discovered she enjoyed drawing themed dresses from magazines. Moving on to slowly insert her own designed looks.

Beverly sat on her bed for a moment to breath in. took a cold sip of kool-aid before setting it off to the side. then leaned back into the multiple pillows. Rubbing her face at thinking over what she just did.

"A deal with Satan is what." Staring up at the ceiling. Darkly thinking of who was to basically be murdered by her hand. Greta Keene First came to mind after all her harassment. Yet Beverly didn't think being an asshole necessarily deserved murder. She was also a kid like the rest of them. "Nope, definitely off the list of possibles."

Luring some crack head from the train yards also didn't seem the safest. Nor trying to lure any known criminal all the way down to it's nest. This was turning much harder then she thought. She **had** to choose *someone*. Sometime soon before *IT* could finally starve to death.

"Should i even go through with it? What if *IT* doesn't keep the bargain? I will be giving it all the energy it needs to devour children again. Maybe even grabbing one of us. I do need to tell the guys though. The deal does involve all of us." Thinking it over.

Despite all her planning nothing was lining up. It was far too dangerous to lure a criminal alllll the way to *IT*. No ideas as to who she would even lure. It's not exactly like she was keeping track of criminals running through Derry. Defeated she went to bed for the night after cranking out her finished homework over dinner.

Waking up to her aunt knocking on her door for school. Getting ready before the sun was up to walk the long time over. Greeted by the guys out front once she made it there.

"Hey Bev" Both Ben and bill greeted simultaneously

"Bev! You do the biology homework?!" Richie questioned right away. She looked toward bill as he was the one to usually be asked these questions.

"I said he c-c-can't copy." Bill answered her look. Looking back to Richie she gave a sorry shrug. Agreeing with bill at this copying of homework becoming a problem

"Aww come on, why not?!" Panicking at being denied.

"Richie you failed the test. Homework cant even save you now. You gotta ask for extra cred."

"Ugggh, but Mrs Baez hates meeee!" Whining at the thought. "What about history?! I passed that test!"

Beverly rolled her eyes as she opened her bag. "Fine." Barely getting the paper out before Richie snatched it to immediately copy answers. Half way through copying he spotted Eddie walking up. Dashing up to him.

"You better bring my homework back!" Beverly shouted semi seriously.

"Eddie-ed-Edds! You do the biology homework?!" almost singing out the multiple names.

"I ain't giving it to you! I am having an aneurysm from enough stress already! I don't want to be worrying about you holding my papers before suffering a quiz by Mr. Sanchez!"

"We're having a quiz?!" Richie panicked more. The bell ringing for classes about to start interrupting their conversations. Beverly snatching her homework back before Richie could disappear down the halls with it.

"Hey i wasn't finished!"

"Sorry, times up!" Beverly replied behind the crowd flowing indoors.

"Well fuck me with a friggin spoon then!" Richie jokingly shouted as they headed in.

Stanley walked up behind the group. Grimacing at Richie's fowl mouth shouting. "Geeze rich could you shout any louder?" Stanley mentioned from behind them all.

"Sure i can! FUCK ME-" he started shouting until the principal, Mr. Alko stepped out of his office. "SAVE Our soulsgoodjesus! ain't that right Stanley boy?" hugging Stan as they all rushed past the principle glaring them down.

"Look, it's **bever**-ly" Greta Sneered from by the lockers. Surrounded by her click laughing around her.

"Hey look, it's Twinkie the kid!" Richie mocking her right back in Beverly's defense. Pointing at the bright yellow outfit Greta wore. A almost highlighter yellow shirt, bright pink pants, and a light blue designer jacket that cost hundreds.

"Watch it loud mouth! I can get you in trouble for anything! My dad pays for this school and if i ask he can pay for you to get tossed!" Snapping at him smugly.

"I'll be kicked outta this hell hole?! Jesus does save!" Hugging Stan tighter before being pressed off by the boy holding in a snicker.

"Fuckin freaks. Hope you enjoy being under pervs bevy!" Gretas group snickering as they stepped into the class. Beverly clenching a fist at her side. Maybe Greta would be on the list. Breathing out all her anger as she went to sit down.

Classes went on as usual. Lunch going just the same. Hanging out before the end of their brake was spoiled by Greta again. Along with a few random guys creepily approaching Beverly for sexual favors. This unfortunately being the norm, but also the norm of the guys cheering her up or threatening off the creeps.

End of school had them all meeting up for the short walk away together before finally splitting.

"R-r-Richie, do your own homework this time w-w-will ya." Bill playfully smacked the back of his friends head.

"Ow! Oh fuck! Abuse! This savage peasant attacked me! My father will toss you out!" Richie playing up being hurt. Changing his voice to mock Greta after she was spotted leaving the grounds in a fancy car.

"Hey, ain't Mike's car ready yet?" Richie asked at remembering one of them was actually able to drive now. Sort of.

Ben answering off what he last heard from mike. "He said over the phone that it drove well around the property this time. Might be set for the road after a few more rounds." Ben further commenting. "Honestly surprised his grandfather helped buy him a new car on

their budget."

"You mean the undriveable hunk of junk he needed to fix up?" Richie reminded them of where mike's "new" car came from. "The fucking ugly rusted bug that had been for sale for years?"

"Even if it is a hunk of junk. Was still a steal at only $15." Eddie added.

"Yeah, then came the hundreds of dollars of repairs after two breakdowns. nobody else wanting it in the first place making it $15." Richie specified.

"Even if it's a hunk of junk it means we'll get to cruise the town more. Less asthma attacks for me when visiting Bev's place." Eddie tossed in.

"Who knew a rust bucket would stop you from dying Edds!"

"Stop calling me that! If my arm was better i would toss my book bag at you!"

"Sure thing spag-eddie, but you know your casts been off a few months now, right?"

"That doesn't mean is fully healed yet ya dingus! What if there's still this hairline crack and I over exert it into snapping again?"

"So what? G-g-going to wait until n-n-next year to see if it's better?" Bill jokingly spoke about eddies "injured" arm.

Richie joking back at bill."It'll be next year by the time we finish waiting for you to stutter out whatever."

"Exaggerate much? O-only takes me a season." Giving Richie a playful shove at the street corner they all walked to.

"Alrighty boys time for me to split off. See you all tomorrow." Beverly started heading down another street. Getting waves goodbye and see you tomorrows. Followed by a few other guys splitting off on their own ways home.

Down along her walk she enjoyed the peaceful quiet time. Feeling the warm sun on her face to the cool breeze across her hair. The concrete sidewalk turning to dirt under her boots as she got closer to home of the RV park. Being outside the main area of Derry it turned more to wilderness beside the lone road. No concrete in sight surrounded by towering trees. Spotting wildlife of deer passing by between the trees.

Her normally peaceful walk disturbed by the feeling of being watched. Looking over her shoulder to see the sight of no one. Anxiety spiking at the thought of a mountain lion being nearby. Her aunt had warned about them before lurking around trails to pounce walkers.

Until a dark green pick up truck eased it's way out from behind a mass group of bushes. Something in her gut saying this wasn't normal. What was she to do?

"It's only one. I can fight off one." Carefully glancing at her surroundings for some kind of defense. Preparing herself for a fight or to bolt into the woods at her side. Cant drive a truck through trees for a chase. Hiding her panic she kept walking an even pace forward.

Carefully listening to the clunking car slow down behind her. Stopping not to far behind followed by the click of a door opening.

Her heart rushed in her chest to bolt. Making it three steps before-

"Beverly!" Her name was called. Catching her off guard enough to pause for a look back toward the calling.

She expected to be facing a total stranger. Not her father.

Body locking up in fear as a deer in headlights would. Gearing to bolt after he stepped closer. Then she saw the gun shining red in his hand. Coated in blood just like the rest of him from the waist down. When they used to live under the same roof she always saw her dad being well dressed. Now he looked to be an absolute mess. Tattered clothes, dark circles under his eyes like he hadn't slept for weeks. Thinner then what he used to be to a unhealthy point. He took unsteady steps forward.

Startling her by taking a tight hold of her wrist. She swallowed fearfully with eyes locked to the side of the road. Terrifying thoughts as to what he was going to do. Weather her body would be found in the woods or not. even being found lacking clothing possibly being a part of her upcoming death.

"Bevy, i am so sorry for what i did. I didn't mean for it to go like that. You know i love you, right? You're my little girl and i don't know what came over me. I guess i was afraid of losing you." His words overly sweet on false words of love. Filled with something else she knew too well that made her sick to her stomach.

" i really am sorry. All the stress i've been dealing with." His tone shifting from sweet. "It got to me, but now I am better. You forgive me right?" to desperate then to something more aggressive. "You know I love my little girl so much, don't you?" Showing itself more in the grip painfully tightening on her wrist.

"Yes, it's okay daddy." Sickly accepting his "apology" for fear of being blasted through the head. A few other details making her sick was the strong scent of blood mixed sweat coming off him. He must have been hiding in the dirt someplace to avoid the police. Who knows who, or when, he had killed as the blood had far past been dried on him. Aside from suddenly having a vehicle to drive in that was never his.

"Good, good, i knew my little girl would stay mine. Get in the truck, we have to hurry. We're going to go far away from here!" his overly large smile holding her unsettled attention until the mention of going someplace with him. Dragging her along to get inside the truck with him.

"Go, go where?!" Panicking at what his plans were.

"We're leaving. Going far away where we can be a family again. Someplace where they can't separate us." Shoving her into the side seat before speeding the truck down the road.

Beverly going quiet in the seat. Thinking on what she could do, she had nothing for defense while he had a gun. Watching the trees zip by the car window. She needed to get away, fast, which meant

tumbling out of the speeding truck as her only option. She needed a open space to do so. She didn't want to jump out and accidentally slam into a tree.

Then there it was, empty dirt space right before the bridge crossing the river. She had to time this just right to not hit a tree or the bridge railing. Deep breaths to prepare herself for the pain she was going to have to deal with soon.

Looking out of the corner to her eye to her dad. One hand slowly shifting to the door handle. Checking it was unlocked before shoving the door wide open. Giving no hesitation with a leap out. Avoiding her dad lunging to force her back in.

Her landing did not go as smoothly as hoped. Landing half way onto old pine needles covered dirt and her leg smashing onto a large rock sticking up. pain shooting up one leg over and over. Rolling uncontrollably down the gravel surrounded rocky hillside down to the pure rocky river shore. Body sore enough to feel beaten down by a group of thugs. Sure of it that she would be covered in bruises soon.

Adrenaline upon stopping by the river getting her up onto her feet almost instantly. Painfully regretting doing so at a bolt of shocking pain from her left leg. Arms spreading out to prevent herself from falling right back down. Urge to vomit stopped by her deeply breathing the fresh river air. Drying her eyes of built up tears.

Looking down she could see a dent at her ankles side. Surrounded by blood collecting from somewhere under her sock. A bone had surely snapped through upon slamming into that rock. However there was no time for a further look.

"Bevy!" Her father shouted with a look over the railing down to her. She looked up to lock eyes for a brief moment. Breaking into a bolt that caused her excruciating pain along the uneven rocky shore. Running turning into a desperate limp to get away.

Noticing her blood soaking right through the sock after barely getting far. Body locking up under all the stress while her father was hunting right behind. She needed to hide someplace where she could lose him. Wiping pain filled tears from her eyes to more clearly see in

front of her. Heart skipping a beat at her cleared vision seeing the water drainage pipe.

Mind thinking that she shouldn't go in there, but that it was her only chance. Running deep into the dark pipe without hesitation. Switching between running to silently treading through the small amount of water. lightheadedness hitting her hard on the verge of passing out.

Cursing to herself as her dad was still following as close as ever. Stopping for a moment upon reaching *ITs* lair. Noting *IT* had moved again while quietly running over to the massive pile. Trying not to alert *IT* while also trying to hide. Peaking around the pile walls, past the open wagon, down toward it's unmoving form.

IT now back up from the hidden room to coil up inside the darker parts of the hollowed pile. Resembling the way a snake would sleep underneath a large rock. Staring at *IT* for possibly any response that she honestly did not want in this moment.

"This was a horrible mistake." Thinking over her being injured and now sneaking right by IT. Into the nest, as tightly up against the walls as possible to hide in the tiniest crevice ever by *ITs* sleeping jaws. Hearing drops of blood falling off her shoe to loudly tap against various toys. Peeking out the crevice to watch between the sleeping insect to the piles entrance. Hearing her father's footsteps beat across the stone.

Swallowing sickly at the sight of his silhouetted form appearing in front of the entrance. Watching as he slowly walked inside over the junk. Barely avoiding *ITs* sleeping form two feet away by pure luck.

She begged in her thoughts for him to give up his searching. Making the mistake of being startled as he stepped a little too close to *IT*.

A part of her fearing the horrible idea to wake *IT* while injured.

The movement of her catching her fathers eye.

"Bevy! Get over here!" He roared. Her heart racing at all the noise he was making. Even more so when he stomped over to her.

A grab of her wrist to yank her out had her scream out in pain with her bad leg forced forward. His grip releasing after a loud crunch. Wailing out a scream of his own pain as he collapsed. The two of them finding out what had happened within that short second.

Massive jaws had snapped down into one of his legs. Jagged teeth locked onto the limb yanking him off his feet to fall before Beverly. The gun falling down in between the junk pile to be lost far within.

Her father twisted around to push on *ITs* massive jaws in hopes of pulling them open like a bear trap. The jaws clenching tighter drawing more blood to flow from between the clenched teeth. Sounding out multiple crackles from the bone in his legs crushed under rows of teeth. Drawing out another cry of pain.

"Beverly! Baby!" He desperately turned to his daughter for help. Yet, there was nothing she could do even if she wanted to. Staring him dead in the eye in a stunned shock. Unintentionally marveling at the fear in his eyes while staring up at her. Watching them the whole time as *IT* let go only to bite a little further up his body. His screams stopping once the jaws crushed his lungs. Crushing more of him until he was swallowed down alive.

Now alone with it she slid slowly down to sit inside her hiding crevice. Adrenalin dying off having her feel the full effect of her injuries. Pain hitting in unbearable waves that were never ending. Blood loss from her compound fractured leg making everything go dark. Accepting sleep so easily while knowing she was dying. Closing her eyes to sleep all the pain away.

KyloRen'sgirl213

thank you. :3 it'll be updated every other day.

3. Divided

The darkness engulfed her. The pain stopping for a time. Waking up to be greeted by the same unpleasant feeling, however not feeling as serious. Opening her eyes to slowly take in her surroundings. Swallowing roughly on a dry throat while her eyes adjusted to what she was seeing. Still inside the mountainous pile. Resting upon a thick pile of soft blankets surrounded by the large coiling body of *IT*. Everything lit up by the orange glowing wagon not too far.

Looking up toward the large snout of *IT* pointed down to stare toward her despite no eyes. "It takes you so long to wake." Speaking down from where it's head rested upon it's long coiled body.

Confused, she stared toward *IT*. Sitting up for a better look over herself.

"Why didn't you eat me?" Asking roughly through her sore throat.

"You already fed me." Answering her. Her mind hit with guilt over the realization of her father now nonexistent. His blood was on her hands now and nothing could change what she had done. She didn't want her father to be eaten. Only wanting him to lose her in the sewer maze, to give up and leave. Despite not fully planning this she couldn't wholeheartedly deny his death was unexpected. She did lead him here and he was a prime candidate for the feeding list.

She pushed herself up from the blankets to stand. Whimpering over the sudden pain in her leg forcing her back down. The scales along it's back up to the large ones circling it's neck flared forward at her cry of pain.

"Don't stand! Your injuries are yet to fully heal!" Scolding her.

She sat up this time to carefully look at the severity of her injury. Sock completely soaked in blood, yet unable to see her wound. The area wrapped carefully in threading. Resembling a thick spider webbing threaded around smoothly. Gently feeling over it to test how tough the webbing was. Moving downward trying to gently feel for that dent she saw in her leg that was now gone.

"Stop fidgeting with that!" Scolding her again.

"Why'd you do this?" Asking curiously. Seemed like *IT* would prefer to eat her or to watch her suffer. Death for her she thought would be top of the list for *IT*. Able to Throw out the deal altogether for two free meals delivered right to his bed.

"You filled your bargain and i wasn't about to be blamed for your death by the others. Pathetic little thing!" Throwing an insult down at her. "i wont throw this deal to waste if it means easy meals without harassment. Even if it means wasting my energy, because you stupidly let all your blood drain by a broken leg."

Beverly thought at it's response."*IT* may just keep it's bargain after all."

" how long have i been out?" Asking her next question.

"Hours. The sun has been down for quite some time."

"Shit, i have to get home!" Pushing herself to stand. Worrying about how badly her aunt must be panicking right now.

"Stop that you fucking moron! You can't get anywhere while leaking!" Puffing up to hiss it's agitation

"I have to get home!" Managing to stand on one shaking leg.

"How will you get there?" *IT* raising its head up to speak further. "Going to hop along the river in pitch black?" Laughing at the thought. Beverly standing there thinking how right it was. Coming up with a solution that may not be the best, but she had to get home.

"... Can you get me home?" Asking on the assumption it would refuse.

"... I will, but you must wait to stop leaking first. It will be a few hours more." Puffing a breath of air down at her. Beverly sighed as she nodded understandably with a look down to her blood covered sock. Carefully easing to sit back down on the blankets. Thinking over what happened when a bitter question came to mind.

"... Do i need to feed you again?" Asking *IT* her final question.

"No, i have enough to hunt my next meal." Answering casually like he was talking about ordering take out. She nodded then turned to look at the ground.

" how should i explain all this? What would the guys think? What would they say? Am i a monster for making a deal with *IT* and actually paying the price for it?" Contemplating it all in silence

The hours passing by feeling awkwardly slow without anything to say. *IT* still appearing to stare her down. Hearing him take in deep inhales of air to expand his whole body before letting it out. Something fascinating to watch after not appearing to need air before. Did *IT* stop breathing as he slept? Did he need air at all and this was only a trick to appear normal.

"You're wound is shut, still your ankle is not yet right. I caution you on using it." Speaking up after the hours had passed.

"I'll try to follow that." Replying sarcastically. Carefully standing up again. Wondering how he was going to help her home. Taking up one of his mantis like claws to spread open into a hand. Gently taking a hold of her to carry her the entire way. Walking out of the drains, through the woods, up to the edge of the RV park.

Hiding a distance away in the woods lit up by bright flashing colors of red and blue. Police cars surrounding her home as the policeman stood by her crying aunt.

IT set her down to walk the rest of the way alone. Watching her slowly approach her surrounded home. Her aunt screaming joyfully to tightly hug the poor girl close.

" where have you been?! What happened?!" Her aunt asked through tears.

"My dad came back. He tried to take me away, but i jumped from the car. I got hurt and ran through the woods to lose him … I also got a bit lost." Lying with a gesture to her bloody leg. Officers grabbing a quick statement before driving her down to Derry hospital.

ITs distracting magic taking effect on the staff. The webbed bandage

going unseen with them only seeing her broken ankle. Double wrapping over the threading to stable her foot straight. Showing her how to wrap it again for later.

The next day she was kept home by police recommendation along with her aunt worrying. They didn't know her dad was no longer around. They assumed he was still skulking about to kidnap Beverly again. Around the time school ended her aunt got called by bill as soon as he made it home. During Beverly's disappearance her aunt called all the guys to see if she was with any of them. Now they had all discovered what happened after bill sending out calls. Soon her aunt was getting 6 different calls to check on Beverly.

Beverly was happy to see all the guys so concerned. Retelling all of them the same story she gave the police. Unsure of telling the truth just yet. Asking bill for missed class notes. Marking important quiz dates they were told. All the guys wishing her to get better along with offers from both Ben and bill to walk her home and mike offering to drive her there. To all she declined to with the excuse that her dad wouldn't try again with so many police patrolling now.

A couple days later she returned to school on a crutch to help her walk. Immediately swarmed by the guys offering all sorts of help. Ben and bill offering to carry books, Eddie offering up some Advil for any pain she may have. Richie making sure to keep her spirits high with jokes as Stan gave her recordings from all the classes missed.

"guys I'll be fine. I only need to catch up on the work."

"oh great, the witch is back!" the happiness of the group dropping by Greta's arrival.

"shut the fuck up before Edd's punches your fake nose in!" Richie threatened. Startling Eddie as he was thrown up to fight.

"i cant hit a girl!" Eddie exclaimed toward Richie.

"what does that have to do with hitting Greta? We kicked one monsters ass, we can kick Greta's next!" speaking confidently as he patted Eddies back.

"Richie will you drop it." Stan rolled his eyes.

"aww come on Stan. Recite that magic holy book stuff at her. It'll probably banish her back to where ever she crawled up from!"

"that's not how it works."

"guess you'll have to figure out new positions with that crutch bevy. Then again I don't think it'll be too hard for you. You boys will help her out I am sure." Greta insulted as her group walked into the school with a ring of the bell.

"Today's going to be rough." Beverly thought to herself. Carefully walking to her first class.

Going through the day as usual. One good thing about her injury was less boys creepily asking her for favors. Although that attracted more attention from Greta, who refused to let Beverly have any peace.

Outside after finishing her lunch she was surrounded by Greta's click. Them circling her resembling a flock of sadistic vultures.

"you didn't escape your dad, did you? He just didn't want you, right? Embarrassed that he has a whore for a daughter!" Greta mocked in Beverlys face. There wasn't anything Beverly could say or do. Maybe if she didn't have the crutch she could have started a fist fight. There were rarely any teachers watching to break up fights.

"i am right arnt I?!" the bully's group laughing along with her. Shoving Beverly down into the dirt using little effort. Beverly having no time to react when one of them yanked her crutch away. Handing it over to Greta before she tossed the crutch over the school yard fence.

"you don't need it. Get one of your boys to help you walk." laughing as they all walked off.

Stan had caught up to her as Greta walked up. Helping Beverly up from the dirt before even needing to ask what happened.

"you okay?" asking as he helped her lean against the fence.

"i am fine, but she tossed my crutch over the fence. I didn't see where it landed." sighing out her frustration.

"i can look. I don't think it would have landed too far." hopping the chain link fence.

"Thanks Stan" Watching him through the fence as he looked through dense shrubbery between trees.

"It's fine. Were both lucky the poison ivy was removed from here. Or else you'd have to use a branch for the day." Shuffling deeper down the thick vegetation covered slope.

"Shit, i forgot that stuff used to be here. That's why she probably threw it over here. Thinking i definitely couldn't get it, or use it, without realizing the ivy's gone." Beverly looking over her shoulder for any teachers. It would be just their luck one came around the corner and Stan was caught in the fenced off drainage area.

Turning her head back when Stan happily shouted. "Got it!" He turned half way then froze. His happy smile dropping as he stared out toward a grouping of trees. Locking intently onto something out of Beverlys view.

"Stan?" She spoke to the boy terrified of something. Hopping herself along the fence to try and see what he was staring at. Yet there didn't seem to be anything. "You okay?" Talking to him this time broke his frozen posture.

"Uh, y-yes. I thought i saw something." He hurried out of the dense shrubbery to fling the crutch over the fence. Taking half the time to climb over the fence then the last.

"Saw what?" Asking to calm her own worries. Retrieving her crutch as the other guys arrived.

"A bird." Stan nervously wrapped up there conversation. Beverly wanted to ask more, but decided against it now that all the guys were here.

"What about a bird?" Bill asked.

"How'd your crutch get over the fence?" Ben asked.

"Greta" Was all Beverly had to say. Dusting off some dirt from the metal.

"We could drop a house on the wicked witch." Richie jokingly threw out. Mimicking a bad girly voice toward Beverly on his next sentence. "Come on Dorothy! Click those shoes three times and your dreams will come true!"

" nah, then I'd be living in a cardboard box. Maybe she can fall off one instead." She chuckled.

Still bitter over what she wrote on his cast Eddie huffed. " maybe she'll get a cast and know what it's like."

" hey, would make great money!" Richie excitedly spoke.

"What are you talking about rich?" Bill raised an eyebrow toward him.

"Battle of the cripples!" Mocking up a stereo typical wrestler announcer voice. " in one corner we have Dorothy Mc-one leg and in the other, wicked witch in a body cast!" Gesturing momentarily to Beverly

"How did Greta get in a body cast?" Ben laughed.

"Dorothy dropped a fucking house on her. Why **wouldn't** she be in a body cast?"

"Because only the first witch died under the house. The other was burned." Stan corrected.

"We don't have the budget for pyrotechnics!" Richie threw his hands in the air. "fuck, Stanley it's like you don't want us to make millions!"

"So what's the plan for the weekend?" Bill interrupted.

"Moms got me going to doctors appointments. No time to break out for me." Eddie clarified first. Their plans usually involved in helping Eddie sneak free first. With that out of the way their plans opened

greatly.

Beverly adding her plans. "I don't think I'll be going anywhere either. Need to catch up on school. Give my ankle a break from walking all day."

"You guys are lame! We could go by mikes to check out his new ride. Pick up some hot chicks with pizza!" Richie spoke.

Stanley popped Richies dream bubble. "You can't afford pizza."

"At least you can loose your virginity to the hot ladies!" The bell blowing over half of riches sentence. "Uggggh, i don't want to head to class!" Whining as they headed in.

"I'll trade your history class for my P.E one." Stanley joked on there way.

"Greta's in your class right? Watch out for falling houses!" Richie joked back as they all split.

Beverly heading into her class of geometry. Sitting in her seat by the window. Half way through the class she was ready to fall asleep under the monotonous voice of Mr Howard. Everyone else had started doing their own thing to pass the time. Drawing in books and on desks with a few still taking notes. One kid wearing dark sunglasses she was sure of having been asleep. Some other kids staring at the clock or out the window.

"What are they doing here?!" One kid shouted by where Beverly was seated. All turning to look out the windows toward the back of the class. The obvious bright colors of two ambulances parked on the high school field causing alarm. Nearby were two police cars with officers talking to the coach. Most the class rushed over to block what little view Beverly had from her chair.

"class, sit back down!" the teacher shouted from the front.

Beverly could hear talking amongst the blocking crowd. "look at that." "that looks really bad." "think they're going to die?" "if they don't get to the hospital they will." "that's a lot of blood." "janitors will have to spray off the whole field."

the teacher, Obviously being ignored, threatened detention to have everybody finally settle back down. By the time Beverly could see the ambulance was already leaving. Seeing the bright red blood trail up to where it used to be parked.

Beverly's mind jumped on what could have happened. Stan was in that class. Was he the one hurt? Why were police there unless it was an investigation? Stan saw something that froze him up on fear near the trees. Was what he saw Pennywise stalking them? Could *IT* have harmed Stan while they were all busy in class. Did she have one of her friends die due to her actions of mercy? She had to find out.

"Mr Howard, my ankles swelling up pretty bad. Can i get some ice from the nurse?" Working to sound in pain. The urgency of getting out helping it sound serious. The teacher didn't seem to care all that much. Setting the pass down at the front of his desk before shooing her to go in a hand waving motion. She got up in a rush, still trying to fake pain as she grabbed the pass on her way out the door.

Free from the teachers site she rushed out to the field. Practically doing a running hop the whole way down the halls. Taking in a worried breath of air once outside. Looking toward the ambulance in trying to figure out who they were here for.

huh, maybe trusting a monster wasint the best idea. :V

4. All fall down

Starting to limp toward the coach to ask what happened when a voice stopped her. "Bev? What are you doing here?"

She turned toward the voice. Relieved to see Stan okay.

"I came to see what the police were here for." Gesturing toward the uniformed personnel.

"Oh! You actually might be interested to hear. Greta has to go to the hospital."

"Why? What happened?"

"Her cheerleader team tried to form that high tower. She was at the very top when the girls on the bottom scrambled away from a huge rat underneath them. At least that's what I heard I didn't actually see. I saw how she landed though. right on both her knees and i thought someone snapped a gram cracker when i heard her hit the grass."

"Why are the cops here then?"

"The girls kept saying this rat was the size of a dog. So police were called in case there was actually a small rabid dog on the loose. I think the girls are only exaggerating the rat. An extra ambulance is sticking around to make sure there's no other major injuries. Ready to take someone if there is." He wrapped up.

"will she be okay? That's a lot of blood over there."

"it looks a lot worse then it was. Her legs are definitely broken, but all the blood was just from some awful scrapes upon landing." he winced slightly at the mentioned injury's. " It was a long fall of almost 10 feet. the other girls got some bad scrapes too." pointing over to the group of girls in uniforms getting bandages from the ambulance staff. Some white areas of the uniform speckled with blood by torn holes. Turning back to Beverly with growing confusion.

"How'd you get out of class? Wont Mr Howard be wondering why you're gone so long?" Puzzled by how she could be gone so long.

"I told him i needed an ice pack from the nurse. I could stand out here for an hour and he wouldn't question it."

Stanley nodding at the answer making sense.

"... Do you think you saw the dog while getting my crutch?" Something in the back of her mind telling her this all still wasn't an accident.

" … I don't think so. I saw a flash of red ... and some white. ... Pretty sure it was a robin of some kind. Haven't seen those in a while, right?" Nerves leaking through his tone shifting toward uneasy happiness to fail in covering for it. Ending in a question looking for confirmation that whatever he saw was only a bird. Not something more sinister known for bearing the color pairing.

"Yeah, of course. You must have seen the last one before it migrated." Confirming to him. Ignoring on telling him the truth again. It never felt the right time to tell them. Even more so now that Greta was badly hurt by *IT*. She had to do further investigating into this on if *IT* was hunting kids.

Thinking on what reason *IT* had for harming Greta, but without scaring her or trying to take any of the other kids. If it were hunting kids why not go strictly after Stan? They were the outcasts and him going missing would hardly be cared about. A popular girl like Greta going missing would have her dad bringing in the FBI for investigation.

She said her good bye to Stan. Heading back to class a little more energized on a falling adrenaline rush. The end of school had her meet up with the guys swarming Stan for information. Noticing that mike was also there along with his "new" rust bucket car.

Mike raised his hand in greeted her. "hey Bev, hows the leg?" pointing down at the injury.

Before she could say a word Richie interrupted. Excitedly telling Beverly the news she already knew of. "did you hear what happened to Greta?! A house fell on her!"

"as good as it can be." answering mike first before turning to Richie. "i know, I saw Stan on the field after it happened."

"dammit, I wanted to tell!" he huffed.

"need a ride home? You shouldn't be walking on it for so long." mike offered a second time.

"I do. i need to pick something up in town first before going home. It shouldn't take longer then a few minutes. That okay?"

"its no problem." he smiled.

mike was teased by Richie. "how many hot ladies have you picked up?"

"hot ladies?" looking confused toward Richie.

bill rolled his eyes. "ignore him."

"hes more likely to get tetanus then ladies." Eddie pointed at all the rust. "this thing have air bags or are we relying on a cloud of dust exploding out to save us?"

"its got em. Has to, to be road ready. I saved up some money toward new seat covers to hide the ugly leather too." mike looked at the ugly mud brown chairs covered in small holes or edges ripping open.

"covers w-w-wont save the looks of t-t-that."

mike rubbing a spot on his back. "its more for the sake of not getting stabbed in the back by springs popping out." taking a moments look toward the drivers seat.

" that reminds me, i have to get going home for my first doctors appointment. See you guys later." Eddie waves with a quick run off toward home.

"don't let them amputate your dick! Stanley let them and look how he is!" Richie shouted after him.

"where do you need to go?" mike asked Beverly.

"the pharmacy." was the first place she could think of.

"see you Monday?" bill asked.

"yeah, maybe sooner if I get board to death in doors." speaking as she limped to the passengers side. Mike helping to pack the crutch into the back seat.

"meet you by the statue tomorrow mike." recieveing a thumbs up as mike started the car. The car sounding like it was going to explode having bill, Ben and Richie nervously step away.

"you sure that it'll make it to the pharmacy?" Ben raised an eyebrow at the rust bucket.

With a shrug mike answered "lets hope." earning a concerned look from Beverly. Waving as he they drove off.

"wow, I thought the drive would take a lot longer to the pharmacy." Beverly mentioned as they were parking after only a few minutes.

"i know. really different then on a bike isint it? Do you need help?" watching Beverly retrieve her crutch after getting out.

"no, you wait here. Wont take long and no need for the two of us to stand at the counter." rushing to get inside away from mikes view to sneak out the back exit. Sneaking behind the store across the street to check the bulletin posting wall. Looking over the old yellowed missing posters of children.

"no missing children. But-" looking toward a new poster of a wanted man. He looked rough and messy with his image being a mugshot post from the police station. Notices of him being dangerous and having disappeared from a jail cell in the night.

Having finished what she really wanted to do, she rushed back into the pharmacy. Going back out to meet mike in the car.

"need anything else?" he asked. Beverly giving him a shaking head in no.

Finding the drive to her home just as short. Thanking mike after

dropping her off before heading inside.

"oh, your home early! How'd you get here so fast?" her aunt asked.

"mike gave me a ride. I'll be in my room doing work." grabbing a coke to take with her.

"alright, and we'll be having fried chicken for dinner." her aunt informed her.

"sweet!" Beverly smiled. Her aunt was really good on traditional home cooking. No more frozen meals for her since moving in.

she got into her room with a sit down on her bed. Setting the coke off to the side to search her back pack.

"aww fuck." she slouched at realizing she forgot her history book. Too late to go get it now feeling it not worth to call mike for a second ride.

"schools probably locked up anyway. No way i am getting the history book out of class until Monday." mumbling angrily to herself while bringing out other class work to do instead. Taking hours to get caught up with everything she missed. Taking a break when her aunt announced dinner was ready.

Sitting at the small rounded table across from her loving aunt. Eating fried chicken sided with mashed potatoes and asparagus. Talking between bites on how schooling was going. What she still needed to catch up on moving on to subjects of after she graduates. Colleges she was thinking of attending. Her grades were so high she could probably get in anywhere. Trying to afford attending however was the major problem. Finishing their dinner she helped wash the dishes. Getting ready for bed with plans on finishing up her over due papers tomorrow. Not giving thought to much else as she entered her bedroom.

Sopping at the doorway in shock when she entered to the sight of her history book. leaning up right against the outside of her window sill. She stared at it as her thoughts processed how it got there. Stepping quietly back out into the living room. Not seeing her aunt who had

gone into her own bedroom. Carefully watching her aunts bedroom door before nervously opening the front door to the RV.

Stepping out onto the cold frosted grass that crunched under her shoes. Seeing her breath in the air illuminated under the orange street lamp nearby. She paused for a cautious look around for signs of anyone nearby. Not even seeing any foot prints in the dirt by her window. Stepping over to take the book off the thin edge to quietly walk back inside. Feeling great unease that someone sneaked up to her window in the pitch black to leave a book that shouldn't have been possible to take. The guys would have just knocked if it was them dropping it off.

Entering back into her room she closed the blinds as her first action inside. Double checking that it was locked down past the closed curtains.

"should I sleep on the couch?" staring at her blocked window that largely spanned over where she would be sleeping. "i guess it wouldn't make much of a difference. I jump out of bed and I am pretty much in the living room already. Auntys right next door if I need her." settling down into bed on the side away from the window. It wasint much space, now giving the worry of slipping off the bed.

"may as well sleep on the floor." she decided. Moving all her pillows down into the small floor space beside her bed. Finding the space uncomfortable, yet somewhat safer. It took her a few hours to fall asleep before waking to the new morning. Thankful for the uneventful night as she rose to get ready for the new day. Grabbing a set of new clothes to bring with her to the bathroom. Taking a refreshing hot morning shower afterwards applying new wrappings to her hurt ankle.

Ready for the day in fresh clothes she headed out to sit at the small lawn furniture. Wanting fresh air as she finished up her school work. Her aunt saying good morning as she left to walk her way to work. Leaving Beverly alone at home to do as she wished. After seeing her aunt disappear from sight her nervousness returned. looking down at the history book sitting in front of her. Opening it as if expecting a deadly snake to be waiting. Breathing out at seeing no creepy stalker notes.

There were quite a few boys who followed her for "special favors". Finding disturbing notes was an unfortunately common thing for her. Seeing them stuffed into her lockers door. Somehow put into her back pack during class time. Shes brought it up with the principal before, but it never seemed to matter. Even when they got their newest principal Mr. Alko she never bothered bringing it up again.

Recalling a time Richie almost got into a fist fight with one in particular. Thankfully he backed down after Eddie fetched the rest of the losers for back up. They never saw that creep again after he was expelled for tagging the old principals car.

Thinking about him being the late night book deliverer made her sick. This had put her off on any work that was history related. Turning toward other work again to keep busy on. Knowing in the back of her mind that eventually she had to do it.

The weekend passed with her fully caught up on work. Her return on Monday greeted normally by the guys hanging out front for school to start.

"seen Greta's new set of wheels yet?" Richie pointed with a grin. Beverly looking over with a raised brow. Assuming her dad bought the spoiled girl another new car. Instead she saw the bully sitting in a fancy wheel chair. Arms crossed looking pissed as ever with two fresh leg casts. A butler looking man dressed in a fancy suit wheeling her to where she wanted. Getting a laugh out of Beverly who covered her mouth to hide it.

"surprised she didint h-h-have that guy wear m-m-matching colors." bill mentioned. All of them nodding in agreement of the clashing bright pink decorated chair vs the dark looking butler.

Ben talked to the group. "at least she cant bother us during lunch for a while." Mainly looking toward Beverly who took the brunt of her insults.

Eddie gestured to the man in joking. "she could order her butler to fight us." Getting a laugh out of them all.

"hey, did one of you drop off my history book?" Beverly asked.

"no." they all answered in unison.

Seeing the worried expression on Beverlys face after that, Ben asked "something wrong?"

there was a pause from her on debating if she should tell or not. "... I forgot it on Friday inside the classroom. Right before I went to bed the book suddenly appeared on my window sill. I never saw who dropped it off and was hoping it was one of you."

"think it was your dad?" asked Eddie.

"i … don't think so. Someone had to have entered the school for it and no way my dad would go unnoticed around here." thinking over the possible people.

"gah!" she shouted at something hard hitting the back of her head. Turning to glare toward Greta around her laughing group. Watching one of them dust dirt off their palm.

Looking down by her feet showed the rock freshly tossed at her. Seeing Richie scoop it up, ready to toss it back. "Richie don't!" she stopped him. "shes not worth detention."

"watch her spitting out teeth sounds pretty worth it!" tossing the rock off to the side in a huff. "would ruin their rich gold covered breakfast. All they'll have left is to suck rose water through a straw." they watched the group heading in early for the school breakfast they reserved special. Perks of the cheerleaders along with the sports teams. Cheerleaders had their own reserved table to laugh at everyone else from as they ate. Gearing them all up to be preppy for the upcoming games.

"did you see anybody walking around the RV park?" Ben turned the conversation back to their original topic.

"no, nothing. I even looked for footprints." turning her attention back.

"w-w-want us to do a steak out?" asked bill.

"i don't know if That'd gain anything. I don't even have an idea who would do this. It came out of nowhere for me. Any of you see

anything odd?" looking to them all. Spotting Stan looking away in a nervous shift. Avoiding eye contact with him in a way of keeping him from speaking up.

"he saw *IT*." she thought in confirmation to herself. "may have to tell Stan first to keep him from suddenly telling bill. Bills not going to be happy about this."

"no." they all answered.

Their attention, as well as everybody elses, was grabbed by loud screams from indoors. A hoard of curious students rushing to find the source. Finding it within minutes as teachers were crowding into the cafeteria. The losers were stuck wondering at the back when Richie pushed through to the front.

5. Detention

Coming back to give the news of what he saw. "the exorcist projectile vomited chili in there!" Richie pointed back toward the cafeteria.

"what?" bill asked confused.

"the big pot of chili exploded!" he clarified.

"how did it explode? did the stove explode while cooking?" Stanley asked next.

"didn't see anything like that." shrugging. Right then Mr. Alko, the principal, was passing by after checking the scene. Grabbed by Beverly who asked him what had happened.

"worker left a pot of chili cooking. It bubbled up and splattered across the place. Lunch wont be available to be served today." informing them quickly before moving on.

"canceled?! But I gotta eat to keep my blood sugar high!" Eddie shouted down the hall at the principal walking away.

"i can split my stash of Twinkies with you." Richie shrugged. Attenuation hooked on Ben looking off at something. "what are you smilein about?"

Growing the hugest grin on the boys face. "Greta and her friends got there serving." gesturing toward the cafeteria doors. All the cheerleaders walking out in tears. Their snow white dresses now ruined by red greasy chili that was sure to stain their hundred dollar outfits.

"what luck." Stan commented.

"rotten luck." Beverly added. Finding this string of random accidents on Greta a little too coincidental. The bells ringing for first class to begin pulling the crowd away. ignoring heading to class straight away she instead headed into the cafeteria.

"what are you doing? Class is going to start soon." she glimpsed back

at Stanley pausing by the door way. Closing her eyes with a sigh she looked back over her shoulder toward him.

"i think somethings up, but I don't know what. So I want to take a look."

"you think *IT* did this?" voice wavering on the whispered question."we never checked after we left the sewers. What if-?"

"**no,** these accidents are weird. But -" working to calm Stan from his suspicion. "well, why Greta and her gang? If it was … do you think Greta would be the first target? Out of us being here or any other children in Derry?"

"i guess so." he mumbled uncomfortably.

"don't tell bill about this."

"why not?"

"because he'll have us charging back to the sewers when this is only paranoia stirring up. Derry does have a history of being accident prone." gesturing to her own injured leg. Ironic in way as *IT* did partially heal the limb.

"okay … Tell me if you do find anything." after the mention of being dragged back into the sewers it didn't take anymore convincing. Heading off to race down the halls to avoid being late. After Stan was gone she turned back to cautiously limp into the back kitchen. Snickering at the chili coated cheer leaders table 10 feet away from the large cooking pot.

Limping over the puddles of chili spilled across the floor. Not wanting to slip and fall into the mess. Standing by the large pot, being actually a giant metal vat made to cook huge quantity's in one go. The top bent open from the top blowing off. Wanting to see inside she set her crutch against the counter. Climbing up through a few small winces of pain to her ankle. By the time she was up she heard the second bell ring that would label her late. She only cared on what she was focusing on in the moment.

Scanning over the destroyed lid scanning upward to some parts shot

into the roof. Peeking back down into the pot for the source of the explosion. Bubbling over, as the principal said, meant something had clogged the ventilation that released the building pressure. Finding a pair of long metal tongs near by she reached them deep into the pipe vent. Hitting the vent fan there with a clank of the metal tongs. Grazing over a different material that didn't screech from metal on metal.

Taking a tight grip over it she worked it out of being stuck in the fan. Yanking it loose off one good yank. Holding up the retrieved item up to her face for a look.

The bright torn remains of a red balloon.

An object that was impossible to float unnoticed into a pot of chili to then get sucked into a barely spinning fan. This was no accident caused by only one. This wasn't the news she was hoping for. Tossing the red material into the trash before stepping down.

Walking slowly to her first class without a care of how late she was. Taking the time to think of what she was going to do. *IT* needed to be talked to. Should she tell the others now? That could ruin the whole deal if bill decides to toss it away. *IT* was causing trouble, but still had not eaten any children as far as she knew.

Closing her eyes to the migraine forming as she entered the class. Startled by the teacher shouting down at her.

"marsh! Why are you late?!" her English teacher Mrs. Bren snarled.

"my ankle-" interrupted again by her furious teacher.

"you have a note from the nurse?!"

"no-" continuing to be interrupted.

"then you have no excuse!" the old women snapped. Taking out the recognizable pink notepad to scribble upon. Ripping the slip off to hand to Beverly. "now go sit!" she ordered.

Limping back to her chair before examining the pink note.

DETENTION crowding the very top of the note.

Reason: disrespectful to the learning environment. Late to class for 10 minutes. no excused reasons given.

How long: 3 days box checked off over a selection of options.

When to attend: after school was the box checked.

Followed by unanswered extra boxes leading down to the teachers large signature.

Glaring at the paper she shoved down into her bag.

"so much for my string of luck." she thought to herself as she pulled out her class book. Suffering through the class onto the next few before lunch arrived. Her stomach growling by lack of food for the past class. Annoyed shed be hungry for the rest of the day. Then, still being hungry, through half an hour of detention before finally able to eat anything after another half hour of walking home.

Heading to her locker to swap her class books. Clicking it open without a second thought. When the thin metal door was opened she paused. Staring at a brown paper bag that had suddenly appeared. She swapped out her books before hesitantly taking out the rolled up bag. Leaning away from it when she slowly opened it to see inside.

Inside the bag was another white container. A take out trey radiating in a delicious smell that made her stomach growl. Her fear of its origins keeping the trey shut. Carrying it to show to the guys the strange lunch left for her.

"guys!" she shouted for their attention. Coming up to them all hanging out under a large maple tree for shade on the sunny day. "i found this in my locker." showing them the brown bag.

"w-w-whats in it?" asking as he was handed the bag.

"i think its food. I hadn't checked yet." swallowing her building drool at the nice smelling bag. "I don't know where it came from." explaining her reason.

"could your aunt h-h-have?" opening the bag as slowly as she first did.

"no way. She wouldn't have the time to drop off lunch even if she found out about lunch being canceled today."

"smells pretty good. Lets see what it is!" without hesitance Richie pulled out the container. Popping it open to reveal a juicy steak perfectly cut into slices settled on a pile of fluffy mash potatoes by a side of collard greens. "holy shit! If you don't want it can I have it?" excited over the perfect meal.

"i don't think that's a good idea. I don't even know who left it. Or even how they got into my locker."

"what are you going to do with it then? Throw it out?"

"its probably best." Ben nodded while examining the food carefully. Everyone going wide eyed as Richie shoved a slice of steak into his mouth without warning.

"Richie!" they all exclaimed. Getting a hold of him to confiscate the food, even the piece he was in the middle of chewing. Unable to grab the small section he had thoroughly chewed off.

"tastes fine to me." said through his proud chewing of the stolen piece.

"s-s-spit -" bills slow speaking interrupted by Eddies fast talking.

"spit that out! You don't know whats been done to it!" shouting the order at him. Unaffecting Richies eating until Eddie added on. "What if some gross dude put his hair into it!" turning more disgusted the longer his friend chewed. Richies eyes widened when realizing Eddie was right on it maybe unknowingly being tainted. turning away to spit out the uneaten meat into the grass. Followed by more spitting of disgust to get every bit out.

"maybe you wont eat random food next time." Stan rolled his eyes at the spitting boy. "how do you feel?" walking the food tray to a near by trashcan.

Richie shouted dramatically up at the taller boy. "sick! I ate some food covered in poison!"

Eddie mumbled, a bit busy on digging through his fanny pack. "like we need this! First its killer clowns and now Bev has a stalker following her!"

"someone should really walk you home Bev. I'll do it." Ben happily volunteered.

Bill shooting him a short glare. "so can I." throwing up his own chance of walking her home.

Shrugging her shoulders."i would say yes, but I got detention for the next 3 days."

after finishing his spitting fit was over. "detention? What asshole gave you that?! You're like the valley dictator on school crap!" exclaimed Richie.

"you mean valedictorian?" chuckling at Richies version of the title. "i was late to first period and my ankle wasn't a good excuse."

"a meal like that had to be made by someone with money." Ben pointed out.

Eddie nodded in agreement. "i would say Greta planted it, but it seems like to much work for her highness." closing up his fanny pack. "what rich guys go here?"

slumping her shoulders. "i recently thought about Derek when my book was dropped off in the night. He fits the bill." putting a name out.

"*that guy*." growled out bill.

Eddie popping the idea of Derek being the cause. "he was sent off to another school though." raising a arm toward the horizon in gesture.

Stanley commenting on Derek still being a possibility."other schools arnt that far. If he really wanted to follow Bev it wouldn't be too hard."

seeing bill shoot him a glare that said "really helpful" after he said how easy stalking was.

"its true." Stan shrugged at the look.

The loud bell ring calling out lunches end. The losers looking to one another on what they should do.

"meet back early morning t-t-tomorrow?" bill tossed out to plan at least something. Everyone nodded in agreement as they headed to their next classes.

Classes classes and more classes Beverly had to sit through. Dreading the fact she couldn't immediately go home. The last class ending left her walking on to detention. Greeted grumpily by Mrs. Bren grading papers at her desk.

"go sit down!" the old women barked.

"can I call my aunt. To tell her I'll be home late" Beverly softly asked with a point to the school phone.

In a gruff voice the teacher answered. "i already did. Sit down marsh." pointing a bony finger at the desks.

Beverly said nothing to that. Figuring if she so much as breathed louder then usual shed be receiving more detention.

Her half hour detention had passed by excruciatingly slow. Taking the time to finish up all her work. Packing her things away to leave until her standing caught the negative gaze of Mrs. Bren.

"sit back down!" the women snapped.

"but, my time is up." Beverly pointed to the wall clock.

"your time is up when I say. You wont be leaving until I finish grading all these papers!" tapping her hand on a massive pile sitting on the desk.

Beverly looked wide eyed at the huge pile. Comparing it to the puny one she got done in the half hour they were there.

"you cant do that! It'll take you-" exclaiming her outrage when she was shot right down.

"i certainly can marsh! Unless you want more detention that will look bad on your permanent record!" Mrs. Bren threatened. "sit!" the women ordered with another point to the desks as if commanding a dog.

The poor young girl had no way to argue. Clawing her grip into her bag strap to tame her rising anger. Turning back around to sit at the far back of the class away from the old hag. Stuck waiting with nothing more to work on. Staring at the slow moving wall clock to anxiously look at the falling sun outside.

Now the time she was stuck here becoming ridiculous. It had now passed the 3rd hour mark shed been stuck in detention.

" Mrs. Bren I *really* need to leave." speaking up from her seat.

"i am not finished with the papers. Have patients and wait till I say so!" the old women ignored her plea. The girl shutting down to stare out the window. Looking back and forth between the falling sun and the slow shrinking pile of papers on the teachers desk.

When the last paper was finally placed upon the pile. The sun was completely out of view. The sky turning a dark blue to darkened sky filling with the first stars appearing.

"you're excused." the old women gruffly let out. Sounding displeased about setting Beverly free from her imprisonment. Scoffing when Beverly bolted out the door to rush out the school.

"shit, shit, shit." she repeated in rushing away from the school. The sun fully disappearing to leave her limping home alone in the dark woods. Her path lit up every 10 feet by yellowed road lamps not helping her feel anymore secure. Staying quiet as possible as she limped home to avoid attracting attention. Knowing well the kind of sketchy folk running around in the dark. Certain reasons being the cause of the curfew blanketing the town.

The sound of footsteps behind her almost causing her to stumble over

a root exposed through the dirt. Trying to see behind her out of the corner of her eye. Not wanting for anybody, if there was someone following, to know she was onto them. Or suffering the bad luck of locking eyes with an aggressive crack head who hated being stared at.

"maybe its just my paranoia spiking?" she thought, but the steps sounded far too clear.

Walking alone on one good leg in the night was not a great feeling. Swallowing down a lump in her throat at making it to the bridge. Unlit all around till further down the road past it. Half way home on passing that town marker. The rushing river below it drowning out the sound of silence. Somewhat comforting, if it didn't make it easier for someone to sneak up behind. An ever growing presence of being watched turning her head to look this time.

Heart skipping a beat by seeing the silhouette of a large figure. Snapping her full attention onto them to asses the situation for a fight. Bright yellow eyes floating in the dark catching her attention next.

Heart strangely relieved at recognizing Pennywise being the one standing there. Trying to make herself seem calmer then she really was. The two in a semi stand off of silence up until Pennywise spoke.

"why are you out so late?" he questioned.

"detention. ... why are you?" asking back on nervous reflex. The unnerving silence of him not answering connecting the dots for her. Something in the back of her mind already knowing.

IT was hunting.

6. Broken promises

"have you been following me?" asking in a way to continue their conversation. It was all she could do in the situation that had her feeling somewhat safe.

"not me, some men have. They've taken quite an interest in you." his glowing gaze slowly shifting to stare off to the right. Shifting back over to stare down at her.

"oh." she breathed out. Her gaze looking away to gather herself. Assuming she was alone in dealing with this problem. A fear in the back of her mind that *IT* was here to cause more harm to the situation.

"i should go." failing to completely hide her nervousness. Aiming to get as far as possible from her current situation between *IT* and others.

"want me to escort you home?" hearing his offer she stopped after one step to look back to him.

"yes." answering softly. Finding *IT* to still be the better option to be alone with. He at worst would eat her while the men could have much worse planned.

Continuing on across the bridge without looking back. Ignoring the skin crawling sensation of being followed by *IT*. Unable to hear him at all growing her unease. Unintentionally looking back over her shoulder now and again to catch a glimpse of him. A wall of silhouetted darkness building *ITs* shape to separate from everything else. The action turning into a thing of comfort to do all the way home. The sounds of far off footsteps still following by the time she made it to the RV park entrance.

Warily she looked back toward *IT*. "thank you." speaking softly to him. Hearing him let out a flat hum with his gaze turning off to the side.

"don't worry about the men in the night. They wont be around long."

turning around in leaving. Blending away into the darkness the farther away he got. When he was fully gone she limped into the RV park for another block. Finding her aunt waiting worriedly on the porch for her.

"oh thank god you're okay!" her aunt standing to hug her. "your teacher said shed keep you late for detention, but I didn't think she meant *this* late." anger leaking through the relieved women's voice.

"neither did I." receiving help up into the RV.

"any trouble walking home?"

"mm, only stumbled a few times in the dark." avoiding the other events.

"are you hungry or heading straight for bed? I hadn't made anything, but I could make you a plate of mac and cheese before bed."

"no thanks. I am heading straight to bed to knock out."

"alright, night dear."

"night." closing her bedroom door to fall into bed from exhaustion. "i have to talk tomorrow." reminding herself she would have to see *IT* again. During their walk she thought of bringing some things up, however the situation wasn't the best for conversation. Thinking of the reason they crossed paths in the first place. *IT* was hunting the men up until they started following her being the most likely case. Although *IT* wouldn't have really needed to get between them. He could have ate the men and be done with it without needing to escort her. Maybe he was doing so out of simple convince of, why not?A girl limping around in the dark can catch quite the attention, meaning more food for him.

"where to even start?" wondering across the topics. "Greta's accident, the balloon in the cooking vent. I could ask him about him about Derek following me or not." closing her eyes having her instantly fall asleep.

Opening them to the morning knock at her bedroom door. Grumbling to announce she was awake as she got out of bed.

Preparing for the day faster then usual on the decision to speak with *IT* in the morning. Tossing arriving to school on time to the side. On her way out the door her aunt told her shed be calling the school if detention kept her unreasonably long again. Waving Beverly goodbye as she went down the road to school.

Walking along up to the point of the bridge. Looking down the steep slope edge down to the flowing river. Wincing already at the thought of scaling down the slope on her ankle. Heading to one particular part of slope that was more dirt then uneven rocks. Making it down to the rocky shore through the stinging pain in her leg.

"if I keep doing this my legs never going to heal." breathing out clouds of breath in the cold air with each word. Gazing over the river on where she could cross it. Having not thought of that issue while up on the bridge. Taking her chances on one piece of shallow river lined with boulders. Using the crutch as a pole to land on further rocks. Breathing out a breath she had been unintentionally holding while crossing the cold water.

"this could be a bad idea." the thought crossing her mind. Thinking up some dark joking thoughts on her way. "my crutch would probably make a good toothpick." turning annoyed at how it sunk into the sand. "the guys would notice i am missing. My teachers would give me more detention." looking down the dark drainage pipe during the thought. " Mrs. Bren would give *IT* detention, so that I would get detention while slowly being digested." stepping carefully through the low water. Last thing she wanted was her foot wrapping to get soaked in cold drainage water.

After the third time of almost stumbling in the dark over her crutch. She frustratingly stopped walking with it. Deciding it to be better limping through the small amount of pain. Never imagining herself to be so happy at reaching *ITs* lit up lair lacking water to trudge through. Awkwardly standing in place to take in the sight of the area. The place was more organized then before. The once toppled pile put back into place wrapped up in spread webbing. The floor covered entirely by the same threading spanning off the center pile as a spider web would. It had become a new floor layer there was so much.

Using her crutch she tapped the threading in testing to see if it was

safe to walk on. Stopping the action when pairs of large spider legs crawled from the wagons entrance. Following right behind them was *ITs* insect head rising out to find the intruder.

"why are you here? Shouldn't you be someplace else?" deep voice echoing its question along the cold stone walls.

"we need to talk!" Beverly shouted across the room. Her own voice echoing in the large vacant room.

"hm, come in then." retreating itself back into the hidden core of its pile. Leaving Beverly to nervously walk across the threading up into *ITs* pile. Wincing at the short climb over the piled toys to stand on the stable wagon floor. Noticing the redecorating done inside the pile since she was last there. The flooring covered in more soft blankets highlighted in various colors by hanging Christmas lights above. *IT* curled up along the edging in waiting for her.

"didn't I tell you not to walk on that leg." sounding more as if he was scolding her then a rhetorical question.

"i got tired of the crutch and that's not what I want to talk about." getting to the point. "did you cause Greta to fall?" asking her first question.

"nooooo, I didn't cause anyone to fall. I was simply passing by when those girls toppled over. They need to work on their form." *ITs* tone sounding a little too gleeful about the whole thing.

"you hurt someone!"

"what if I did? You didn't say I couldn't. As long as I don't eat them." grinning its large crooked teeth over the loophole.

"don't do that!" not happy with *IT*. "did you also explode the cooking vat?"

"Why would that matter?" avoiding the question.

"why do it unless it was aimed to harm someone." not letting *IT* squirm away from the question.

"its also fun to ruin someones day." mumbling through its jagged teeth.

"don't do it." ordering flatly. "you have any idea of whose been following me?" moving onto the last topic.

"no one has."

"someone dropped off my book in the night and later food in my locker. You have no idea who did that?" asking again.

"i did that."

"why fetch me my book?" asking confused.

"you needed it." answering simply.

"why get me food?" asking next.

" because you were hungry?" shrugging all eight of its shoulders. starting to sound as confused as she was while asked these simple questions. "why didn't you eat it?"

"i didn't know where it came from! Have you been following me?"

"not following, but checking in. … why are you the only one here complaining?" the questioning tides turning onto Beverly.

"um..." unable to think up a good enough excuse why.

"you have not told them?" bearing its teeth at the conclusion.

"not yet." her words causing its scales to flair forward.

"why not?!" *IT* snarled. "how do I know the bargain will be kept?!"

"I'll make sure it will be. I have to wait for the right time to tell."

a deep growl escaping *ITs* throat. "there is no bargain unless you tell the others. Nothing is agreed upon." Not at all happy that the bargain wasn't even fully agreed between each member of the set covenant.

"I'll tell them, okay? Its hard to find a time to talk with them during

school."

"how do I know you'll keep your word?! I've done as you've asked, yet I am not protected if one of you brats decides to reject the deal! Even you do not know of how they will react!" bearing its teeth through the conversation.

"please, give me a little more time to tell. I have to wait for when were all free to speak alone on the weekend. I cant exactly say anything out in public."

agitated *IT* tapped its multiple legs. "why not after school? You're all free then."

"not me. I still have detention."

"your suppose to leave during the night still?"

"hopefully not the night. I was forced to stay later then the usual detention."

"what for? By whom?" one question coming in right after the other. A strange outrage or even a demanding tone of an answer from her. Assumed to be leaking anger building over the conversation.

"one of my pissy teachers. It doesn't matter." waving off the issue. "I have to go now. Don't hurt anybody else!"

IT mocking back eerily in Beverlys voice. "Don't hurt anyone else!"

" i mean it, or else!" Snapping up at the large creature towering over.

"Or else what?! The deal hasn't even been accepted by everyone. Why should i keep this going?" Scowling at her orders. "i may as well drop this false bargain for when its finally settled!"

"don't! Everything will be fine." Saying it to somewhat to herself as well as to *IT*. A deep growl escaping *ITs* throat from within the nest as she cautiously stepped down the piles entrance to leave. Wincing the entire way she walked.

"Stop walking on that leg!" she heard *ITs* growling out from down the

tunnels. Getting an eye roll from Beverly as she made it out. Walking on the crutch once she was back on the flat road. Limping in a rush to school to not be super late. Happy to know that at least she doesn't have Mrs. Bren for first period on this day.

Limping out to her PE class on the field. The teacher not caring the slightest that she was missing for half the class. With her ankle the way it is she could only sit around the class. Eddie, who was in the same class was only to do light exercise due to his asthma.

The boy running up to greet her. "Hey Bev, why so late? Ankle bothering you?"

"It was, but not now since i am sitting."

"Did you get Bills message last night?"

"No, i didn't even get home till around 9. teacher didn't let me leave until ALL her papers were done."

"Yeesh." The boy winced. "She kept you in detention until 9?! That's illegal! You could sue and get rich off of that!"

"Not worth it." She chuckled. "So what did Bill want to say?"

"We were suppose to stakeout your locker for the stalker."

"Ohhh, yeah, about that … My aunt did drop off that lunch." She lied through her teeth.

"Oh thank god. I didn't want to be got out of class stalking for a stalker. … But what about your book? Some guy grabbed that out of a locked class, right?"

"Yeah…" She was secretly hoping that Eddie would drop the subject.

"Maybe it's a TA following you? They can get classroom keys no problem. There's an allowed keys list on the principal's secretary desk. Want to go check that?"

"... Yeah, okay. Go tell the coach i need help getting to the nurses for ice." Part of her tossing between the telling the truth or to keep

playing along.

"Gotcha!" He went over to the coach. Talking to him far enough that Beverly can only hear mumbles between them.

Eddie came back over. "Okay, were good." Helping Beverly off her seat in faking her need for an assistant. Entering the building to pass classes down toward the principal's office. The two spying around the doorway corner. By lick the secretary was gone from her desk. They found the list sitting as a small paper under her keyboard.

"Any names stand out?" Eddie scanned over the paper himself. Beverly barely making an attempt at it. Knowing the answer to the grand mystery already.

"Nope." Answering as footsteps could be heard approaching. The two, not wanting to be caught out of class away from the nurse, hid under the desk. Seeing the principal urgently enter his office. The two staying to eavesdrop on the principals suddenly urgent call.

"What happened?!" He shouted into the phone. "Fucking Christ!" They heard the man through the door.

His tone panicked or afraid. Rage coming out over his conversation as it went on.

"How did it happen?!" …

"Fuck!" …

"How can i not worry! A kid is fucking **DEAD!**"

7. Regrets

The two under the table glanced at each other in shock. Whipping their heads back around to listen more carefully.

"What do police think happened?" … "Animal attack." … "I guess." … "like you said. Children go missing all the time. Its such a shame." … "don't worry, I'll be fine." … "Bye." The conversation ended on a click. The principle jogging out toward the front of the building.

"What was that about?" Eddie asked in whisper.

"I don't know." She whispered.

" something killed a kid. … Do you think-"

"No." Interrupting him. "Not everything is because of *IT*. It probably was an animal. We do get mountain lions and bears around here. Eddie getting that obvious worried look on his face. Pulling out the inhaler for a puff.

"You okay?" She asked. Getting a nod as he took another puff of his medicine. "Want to visit the nurse? I kinda do need ice actually." Giving a smile to comfort him.

"Okay." He nodded. Carefully sneaking out to check if the coast was clear. Waving Beverly to come out of hiding. For the rest of the period they sat in the nurse's office. Shooting each other concerned looks or ones of confusion. Unable to talk about the subject with the nurse sitting less than 10 feet away.

The ringing of the school having them separate. Eddie forced off to class as he was fine by what the nurse saw.

"Still need to ice your ankle?" The nurse asked Beverly. Who was laying back on the thin med beds with an ice pack wrapped around her ankle.

"Yeah, it's still really swollen." This time not lying. Her ankle hadn't taken all that uneven walking off the crutch very well.

"Okay, but you,ll have to go to your next class in 10 minutes. If it's too bad today, then you can be excused home." The nurse said before exiting the room back to her small desk.

Beverly sighed from her seat. Staring up at the ceiling on what to do. Did Pennywise not trust her to hold the deal? Did he toss it all aside after their conversation? Was it only a matter of time for some child to be devoured.

"No, this doesn't feel right." Why go after one random kid instead of her, right then, in the nest? "Not even attempt to pick me off before i made it to school. He had a whole 15 minutes to think it over before i made it. Kill a kid, leave remains to be found so quickly? So much waste of energy for a tragic message? To get us pissed off and then what? It can't have enough energy for a round 2 yet."

" *IT* hibernates, but a bear needs fat to survive. *IT* needs energy to do the same. No way it collected enough off *half* an eaten child. He may as well be starting his hunting spree over like he'd just woken up. We know about him, he knows that, so he cant get very far." Talking it over to herself.

"... **I know** about him." Correcting herself. "Nobody else. That's not helping anyone. I keep this secret any longer our-"

"Times up." The nurse pulled Beverly from her thoughts. "I'll give you a note to class. If it still bothers you, come back to call someone to pick you up." The nurse reminded her. Taking the ice packs back to storage. Beverly taking her blue slip from the nurse to the class. Going through the usual of sitting through her classes.

Lunch time she went to switch books in her locker. Food service still canceled after Pennywise's sabotage of the cooker. When she opened the small metal door she found another rolled up brown bag. Grabbing it immediately to cautiously open similar to the last time she did. Hit with another strong smell of freshly cooked food.

Pulling out the white food tray to cautiously pop open that next. Inside was a large burger pre cut down the middle for easier eating of the massive half's. A side container sealing a hot batch of mac & cheese next to a mountain of fries.

"Looks normal." Dissecting each little ingredient of the meal. Hesitantly taking a bite for the final testing of it. Nothing strange, tasting like a normal burger. No sudden appearance of worms or blood oozing. "Okay, no more of that." Making herself sick off imagination. Packing everything back to share it with the guys.

Books sorted she went outside up to the tree they stayed under for shade.

"Hey guys, i got food." Holding up the lunch.

Ben looking confused about why she was happy about it. "That from your stalker again?"

Eddie corrected the assumption. "It's from her aunt."

"What?! So that juicy hunk of steak wasn't tainted?! We could have ate that!" Richie whined at the sky.

"Yeeeah, sorry about that rich. I didn't find out till later." Beverly halfly apologized. " i got a big burger if you want some of that."

"Fuck yes!" Standing by her for the offering.

"Split it with Eddie Handing him half the huge burger. Splitting the giant pile of fries between Ben and bill. Stanley getting the mac & cheese to himself. Her eating the large remaining half of the juicy burger.

Smiling at watching Eddie pick out the tomatoes. Giving Richie the pickle slices who he watched with disgust as he straight ate the pickles plain.

"How can you stand that vinegary taste?" Biting into his burger half while Richie crunched on the pickles.

"No vinegar, tastes salty like Gretas tears." Joking through chewing.

"You're drinking her tears now?" Beverly laughed.

"After it's filtered with gold." Taking the official first bite of the burger. Breathing out as he chewed by the unexpected temperature.

"Hot,hot, hot!" He chewed through.

"Y-y-you were suppose to blow on it dumb ass."

"Like how i blowed your mom?!" Richie replied after the food was mostly chewed. Bill waved him off then turned his attention to Eddie

"Did Eddie tell you my idea? It d-d-doesn't matter much now if he didn't. Since the lunch turned out to b-b-be from your aunt."

"He did. We tried to find out who got my book instead. We guessed it may have been a TA." Her happy expression dropping. "We didn't find anything, but heard something bad from the principal's office."

"What was it?" Stanley asked with a toss away of the empty aide container.

"A kid died." Eddie answered for her. Everybody who was still eating paused for a second.

"How'd they die?" Bill questioned. Beverly noticing how on edge he was already.

"Animal attack." Eddie answered.

" has to be-" bill coming to a fast conclusion.

"It's not *IT*!" Beverly interrupted.

"Why not?" Bill holding back his rage to ask.

" not every kid death is *IT*. Derrys never been safe for anyone even when *IT* hibernated. An animal can kill people once a year. We do get bears, mountain lions-"

"Moose and poisonous snakes." Stanley added.

"Exactly." She gestured toward Stan.

"Lets c-c-check the wall then. If there are more posters w-w-we'll know."

"I still have detention. If we want to check we'll have to check

tomorrow morning. Else i am going to get double the detention."

"A-a-alright. Eddie, fake an asthma attack and go to the nurse. Say y-y-you need to call your mom. Call mike and tell him we need an emergency meet up e-e-early tomorrow."

Eddie looked at bill wide eyed. "I can't fake an asthma attack! I think the nurse will figure things out when i say "hey mike! Can we use your car tomorrow to investigate kids dying?" over the phone."

"T-t-this is important. I know you can pull it off." Giving faith to the nervous boy.

"Okay, but I better not get detention for this. My mom will never let me see the outside world again. It'd be permanent home school for me!"

Richie jumping in to joke. "At least you'll have a hot teacher!"

"Shut up Richie!" About to smack the laughing fowl mouth jokester if he hadn't had moved away.

"This is serious." Bill killed the laughter. "Keep a lookout. W-w-we don't know if *ITs* here or not." They all agreed. Anxiety's high with not wanting to speak any more of *IT*.

The rest of their lunch turning from oddly quiet to words suddenly buzzing among students. Police rolling up in front of the school to meet outside with the principal. Catching the eye of every student to gather a crowd. Kept away by a few more officers. Rumors already being spread of what was going on.

The losers club stuck again at the back. Watching far from any possibility of them figuring out whats going on.

Richie turning to Beverly. "let me borrow your crutch. I cant beat a path to the front!" receiving a glare from her that hid an inner laugh. This was serious and not the best time for jokes.

"hey!" he caught the attention of a kid running off from the crowd. "know whats going on?"

the kid stopped with a grim paled look. "the principals kid was eaten by a mountain lion. They think he was alive during it too." the kid spoke quickly. Sickened by repeating what he heard he turned green with a rush off to the bathrooms.

The losers turned pale. Looking between one another in shocked silence.

"same kid?" bill asked Beverly and Eddie.

Beverly speaking through a depressed breath of air. "we didn't hear it was his. It didn't sound like it." looking to the floor, sickened. *IT* had to be on a killing spree.

When the bell rang everyone was escorted back to class. Moved along by officers as some students kept loitering for the gossip. The classes passed, the end of school came, the losers met back up before leaving the grounds.

"i made the call." Eddie informed. "he'll pick each of us up around 7 tomorrow morning."

bill nodded. "set alarms." glancing over the others who nodded back. Speaking stay safe to each other when Beverly had to leave for detention.

Walking the whole way there glaring at the floor. Pissed at IT for what it was doing. Pissed at herself for allowing this to happen on stupid hope that it would. Then there was simply being pissed at her asshole teacher she was heading to detention for. Yet when she walked in she saw the principal sitting at her desk instead.

"wheres Mrs. Bren?" asking the man doing paperwork.

"the breaks on her car failed and she had an accident. Shes fine, but wont be back for a while. For now I am taking up her work until a substitute is found." he answered, pointing for her to go sit down. Returning back to the work as she did.

Watching him bury himself in paperwork pulled at Beverlys heart. Having to stay late babysitting with papers while grieving at work instead of home. All due to a mistake she made.

" i-im sorry about your son." speaking her condolences as gently as she could. The man paused his writing, but didn't look or even speak to her. A moment of silence passing before he picked up writing again.

She turned her attention to her backpack. Pulling out school work to pass the time. Helping her mind avoid the thoughts of guilt eating at her. How many other kids would they see on the wall? Pushing the thoughts away again. Finishing some homework when the thoughts crept in again. Was *IT* biding its time? Waiting to have enough energy to gorge itself on children overnight?

It wasn't long before she was free to leave. This time making it home at a much more reasonable hour. Greeted as usual by her aunt. Who soon noticed Beverlys low mood.

"you alright dear?"

"i am fine. Hate detention is all. Ill be relaxing in my room until dinner, okay?" covering her real reasons.

Despite feeling that wasn't the truth, her aunt didn't press further. "okay. I'll knock on your door when foods on the table."

dinner came and passed with little conversation at the table. Through the night she didn't get a minute of sleep. All over the same subjects she worried over. Preparing for the worst at the break of morning. Preparing early before her usual time to leave. Writing a note for her aunt to know she left early.

Greeting mike along with a few others packed into the small car like sardines. The air between everyone full of anxiety. The uncomfortable quiet broken by Ben.

"what are we going to do if ..." voice trailing off.

"we fight it l-l-like the last time." bill answered.

"we couldn't even hurt it once it changed. We don't even know how it could have gotten better either."

Richie butted in. "ah, some idiot crack head probably stumbled in and

gotten eaten."

"i d-d-don't care." bill huffed. "this time w-w-we'll beat *IT*. T-t-then watch it e-e-every day if we have to. T-t-to make sure it stays dead." his stutter worsening the angrier he got.

Richie chuckled over it all. "calm down bill before you suffer a stroke."

"s-s-shut up Richie!" bill snapped. Starting his rhyme to break the stutter. "He t-t-thrusts his fists against the post, and still i-i-i-insists he sees the ghost." repeating it to himself.

"guys! Now's not the time to fight!" Beverly shut them down. "time to get out anyway." Beverly gestured toward the car window. Mike parking the car not too far from the wall bulletin board alley. Everyone piling out from the car far too small to squeeze 7 inside.

Although she was the first one out she delayed in approaching the alley. Fear having her lag behind everyone. How much irreversible damage was done from her mistake. Bill stomped up to the mouth of the alley where he stopped in his tracks. Starring frozen toward the wall out of everyone's view.

"what is it?" Ben asked with no answer received by the frozen bill. Coming up behind to also peer down into the alley. " … oh ..." freezing also at what he saw.

The rest of them looked between each other then rushed over. Except for Beverly standing back on a sinking heart watching all the others stop at what they saw. She limped over to stop at the first glance of what she saw.

A wall of white posters.

Layered over and over to make a noticeable bulk. It may as well have been a layer of thick wall paper.

Not a spot of wall showed between the white posters. This wasn't like all the other times. When posters were layered up by three in one spot. Layered here or there with exposed parts of wall in between

All blaring large photos with the massive word MISSING in black.

Some already falling off in chunks under the weight of their stapled stacks. The fallen ones replaced right after by a man stapling on even more. A pile sat near by on a cardboard box for easy reaching.

8. The usual suspects

"shit." Richie mumbled out.

Beverly couldn't bare to look at the wall. All their deaths were her fault. For the rest of her life she'd know herself as the one who brought back a child eater Derry was almost rid of. She had to face the truth now that there was no denying it. She held back the tears in her eyes for a few reasons. Telling herself she didn't deserve to cry. Not wanting any of the guys to worry over her.

"look at the addresses. They're all around the same area where they were last scene. None are in town." Mike pointed across a few posters closest to them.

"forest brook, campers rest, the small lake, rocky gorge-" Ben listed a few locations off. "all these places surround the quarry. Why only the quarry?"

" o-o-old tree field too. T-t-that's where the boy scouts gathered. L-l-lots of them up here." feeling his stutter still too hard he continued his saying. "He thrusts his fists a-a-against the post, and still insists he sees the ghost." repeating quietly.

"aside from easy pickings *IT* must have moved. We do know where its nest is in the sewers. would be dumb to stay in the same place." Mike gave a possible answer.

"that m-m-means we have to find its new nest. Somewhere in the q-q-quarry."

"that's gonna take us century's!" Richie scoffed. "the sewers at least had a map in the old archives to follow!"

"not to mention easier to get through." Eddie added. "aside from all the grey water infested with disease the whole place was stable. The quarry is filled with crumbling cliff sides, avalanches, snakes that can rot your skin off with a bite! I don't want to step into some snake den then be airlifted to a hospital!"

"we have to l-l-look. We'll all wait after school for Bev to get out of detention-"

"you want us taking Bev to the quarry with her mangled ankle?!" Eddie gestured toward her injury.

"its fine, I'll go. Better for us to all stick together anyway." Beverly spoke up. Feeling hugely responsible for this disaster she felt required to help solve it. If she was harmed during the scouting it would only be considered karma biting her.

"w-w-were going today." Bill set the matter in stone. "only to look for the nest. A-a-after we find it we'll prepare the next move tomorrow." he went on over how they were to prepare. Beverly blanking him out to look closer over the posters. Feeling dead inside over all those gone forever. Pausing to look longer over the one showing the principles son.

MISSING:

Jake Maulker

a large black and white photo of a kid barely 7 years old.

Last seen 9/20 7:18pm on the boy scout grounds around dinner serving. Left to the restroom attended by one scout master. Entered bathroom then after a time the scoutmaster grew concerned over not hearing the boy. Discovered he was missing, may have sneaked out of the bathroom window. Reasons for running away, unknown.

"9/20? that was 2 days ago. The principals kid was missing for a whole day before getting a notice?" examining the strange date. "7:18 … the clown had been with me by then. He couldn't have grabbed that kid. Is this the one case it **was** an actual animal attack? … why'd the kid leave? Why did nobody tell his dad right away?" her train of thought broken by mike calling her.

"Bev!" he shouted for who knows how many times. she turned her attention to mike. "we're heading to school now." he informed.

"the last place I want to be today." mumbling as they walked to the car.

Hearing a "yeah." in agreement from mike.

The group returned to school earlier than usual. Keeping a watch for anything suspicious. For any possibility of kids they usually saw not arriving. Any glimpses of a certain clown coming to mock them. Yet nothing seemed out of the ordinary. Classes started going up to lunch break. Beverly stopping by her locker for books.

Body locking up at the sight of another fresh lunch bag. The clown had stopped by again to drop off a lunch, but why?

She couldn't even look at it. Tossing it into the nearby trash can without a second thought. Her appetite thoroughly ruined after this morning. Carrying on to meet the guys to pretty much stay as watching posts. Separating back to their scheduled classes at the end of lunch. Her stomach twisting into the most sickened of knots at the schools end approaching. Meeting the principal for her last day of detention.

Passing by the man writing over paperwork at the English teachers desk. The missing poster of his son clawing into her mind. Wanting to ask what happened, but asking about his dead son so soon would be incredibly disrespectful. Sitting down in one desk to blankly stare down toward the wood surface. Carved in images of tic-tac-toe, names scribbled, or some art of little turtles. Looking away down to her bag to start homework. Yet, the back of her mind itching without relent to go forward on the news of Mr. Alkos son.

Her normal speaking turning softer when she began. "the news on your son … came late." she meant it to be a question, but it didn't come out that way. The man paused his writing to glare up at her.

"what?" his tone asking seriously.

"your son was missing for a day before you were notified … Do you know why?"

"***no. why?***"

" … I don't know why, but isn't that strange? He went missing from a camp in the night and that camp took a whole day to report him

going missing."

"they found him dead from an animal attack. They knew where he was, but didn't want to immediately say." the man glared.

"He ran away for some reason. Escorted by one of the councilors to the bathroom only to disappear for what? I think someone needs to look into that. Even if an animal got him, he still ran away into the woods in the middle of the night. No kid does that for no reason." the mans glare burning into her the entire time she brought up the strange details.

He stood up. "I need to make a call." walking out of the room.

Beverly went quiet with a look back down to the desk scribbles. "fuck. Did I do the right thing?" she asked herself while looking over the carved turtles. Pulling out school work to start on. Writing past her anxiety while the principal was missing from the class.

Noticing him to be gone for almost the entire detention period. Returning right as Beverly was packing her things to leave.

"marsh, how long did your English teacher keep you on your first day of detention?" asking her suddenly. Alarmed by the question she hesitated on answering truthfully. Why did he want to know now on the last day?

"she kept me until 7."

"that's what I thought. You'll be staying until that time." he stated.

"why?! My aunts not going to be happy!" exclaiming in shock.

"I already told your aunt you'll be staying late again. Sit down." he ordered. Leaving the classroom again soon after.

"should have kept my dumbass mouth shut." scolding herself in thought as she sat back down in her seat. "fuck, the guys are stuck outside waiting for me." remembering their meetup that was suppose to happen. "sorry guys, I was stupid." scolding herself while thinking of an apology for later. "brought up the principals recently deceased son is why. He, of course, got pissed about it." continuing to herself

with eyes switching between the clock to the window. Waiting for the time to leave by how far the sun was falling. The oranges of the colored sunset turning to reds that glowed inside the darkening classroom.

"I guess I can go?" looking toward the wall clock reading 7:00. walking toward the door when the principal entered.

"sit back down." he ordered. She was about to argue when she saw a large knife in one of his hands. Backing up around some desks to be between him and her. He slapped down a piece of paper on one of the desks. Setting a pen on top of it all while continuing to glare her down.

"you're going to write a murder confession." he told her.

"what?!" questioning wide eyed.

"you're going to write a letter on how you killed my son." he clarified.

"I didn't kill your son!"

"i don't care. Write the note, now." threatening on a wave of the knife in front of her. She swallowed a lump in her throat as she glanced at the blank paper. Eyes snapping back to him giving further orders.

"write how on the 20th you left detention normally. You were angry about getting detention and wanted someone to pay. You ruined your teachers brakes, but that wasn't enough. You went after my son and lured him out into the woods. You abandoned him out there to die because you were angry over detention."

"that wont fit." trying to get herself out of this. To convince him this setup would backfire on him. " I can't-" even her own excuses weren't working. She did have the time to leave school and visit the boy scouts place. She wasn't popular anywhere in town and everybody would agree on some rumor that she was a murderer. Even eddies own mother would go on trial to claim her an evil troublemaker. Her only witness that could save her skin was a clown that Derry didn't know existed. "my aunt called that day!"

"she called **me**. I didn't know where you were. Write the letter." he

repeated.

"I didn't-!"

"you did! Write it!" he interrupted, not wanting to hear anything she had to say.

"i-i cant i-" interrupted by him grabbing her by the collar of her shirt.

"come on, move it." dragging to pushing her along. Forcing her to abandon her school bag next to her crutch in the room. Forcing her down the halls by the knife prodding at her spine the entire way.

"ow! what are you doing?!"

"shut up and move!" forcing her through the cafeteria to the loading back room. Parked inside was a large white van. Catching her eye was something dark splattered across the front windows.

"Jacobs!" the principal shouted at seeing nobody in the van. "dammit, screw him!" mumbling the last bit to himself. Pushing Beverly along toward the back of the van.

He got half the back door open when a blood stained white glove grabbed his throat. Shoving him backwards to step out was the tall grinning clown splattered in blood.

Grinning large sharp teeth *IT* asked "what are you doing to my child?" grin dropping as the principal swung the knife to carve a gash across the clowns chest. A hissing growl released from its throat out of pained anger. Tossing the man away to examine the wound. Blood floating up to dissolve from the fresh wound. The sight of it only angering the clown more.

The man shoving Beverly to flee out the open garage doors into the darkened water canal near by.

"who is that?!" the man demanded to know of Beverly. A question she wasn't sure how exactly to answer.

"hes *IT*." was all she could think to say as a knife was threatened to pierce her side.

"what?!" shoving the knife further into her side.

" *IT*." she whimpered out. Shoved to the ground for giving an answer he didn't like.

"you stupid girl! I wouldn't be mocking anyone holding a knife. Whatever! I don't care! I'll kill him too!" raising his knife up causing Beverly to flinch under him. Opening her eyes after hearing the man scream by sharp claws tearing into his face. Ripping him off of her as easily as pulling a sheet from a table. Making beverly able to squirm away off to the side. Watching the events that were to follow the man vs Pennywise.

In a flash of claws swinging down the man's chest was carved open to pour out blood in a waterfall. Watching the man squirm around in pain to desperately hugging his chest to stop the blood.

"fucking fool." the clown mocked. Shoving him down into the leaf litter forest floor. Cracks sounding out from the forced collapsing of ribs. Worsening the bleeding in the mans panic to defend himself. Chunks clawed away to gleefully cause more pain to the screaming man. The grin of the clown stretched unnaturally wide to make space for the layered teeth extending. Jaws opening over the mans face to ooze drool down onto his carved skin.

Beverly looked away to not see the jaws clamp down on the man's skull. Although she heard the sickening crushing pop of his skull being eaten in one bite. Eyes opening wide, startled by arms wrapping around her right after.

"can you stand?" Pennywise asked uncharacteristically gentle. Stopping halfway through picking her up when she didn't stand right away.

"yes." answering as she quickly gathered control of her shaky limbs. Wanting to sit for a moment, but not wanting to appear weak in front of *IT* either. Freaking out when *IT* patted her up and down.

"what are you doing?!" stepping away as she pushed away his hands.

"stop moving! You're covered in filth!" *IT* scolded as if a mother

would to a small child. Moving close to continue brushing dirt off of her. Stopping around one part of her side. "your injured." catching her attention to look where he was. A stain of blood growing where the knife was held against her. Off all her building adrenaline she wasn't able to feel the injury.

"hold still so I can fix it." ordering her. Stretching a hand into something smooth and black. Long slender fingers appearing like the legs of a black spider. Tapping the tips of his fingers together to then separate with a spreading silver web between each. Stretching the threading over the wound back and forth. Smoothing it down to finally cut the threading clear.

"the threading won't help it heal fast enough. I'll have to take you to the den for that." about to pick Beverley up when she protested.

"Whoa, wait! I won't go to the den or anywhere!" blurting out with a limp away to keep from being picked up.

"you're injured! That needs to be fixed which I can only do at the den!" *IT* snapped down at her.

"have you been eating kids?!" confronting him outright. While her blood was still rushing on adrenaline to do so. Not afraid of *IT* in that moment, only angry that her trust had been abused. Alone, and injured, with *IT* in the woods may not have been the best of places for this confrontation.

9. Oxymoron

"no, I have not harmed a child since startling that unstable tower of girls." *IT* answered confidently.

"why are all theses kids going missing?! Who's taking them?!" blurting out the questions as soon as they came to her.

"men are! We can't stand around here! You need to be brought to the den!" growling down at her. Rushing along the conversation to end it.

"what men?!" holding her ground under the clown growing angrier.

"let me bring you to the den first! you can ask for the secret herbs and spices of KFC for all I care down there!" impatiently snarling down at her.

The clown being firm on holding back the answers she wanted. She accepted the fact it wasn't going to go far here. "... fine." accepting the help. Maybe she'd get farther on questions when they arrived. Enjoying how they wouldn't be talking next to a dead body at least. Weirded out as she was scooped up into the clowns arms to be carried. Brought down into the drainage ditch metal pipe. Passing through pitch blankness for only a second before they arrived back at the nest. Walking up into the hollow pile where she was set down in the middle atop a pile of blankets and pillows.

"don't move from here." he told her. "should fix your ankle while here as well."

"what men?" asking as soon as she could.

"there are packs of them hunting around Derry. Some were after you that one night I escorted you home. I've eaten many from the groups I've stumbled upon, but I am sure there are many more I have yet to discover." answering her.

"why are they taking kids?"

"I don't know the exact reason, I assume for nefarious purposes. Most children are of your age, and female, you can probably fill in your

own assumptions." informing her on what limited knowledge he had. "I've spied on a few of their meetings since the night I picked off those first two men. Trying to find the leader of these packs, but they never meet. At least not in their usual space and I cannot track them all at once."

"are you actually doing anything?"

"i am trying." *IT* snarled in an offended tone.

"sorry, I didn't mean it like you weren't. I wasn't sure if you'd care enough to do anything, is all."

"I don't care much for the health of children. What I hate are stupid humans walking around like they own the place. They're messing up my supply of food … for the future." tacking on the last part. "now they're messing with your circle that I don't want to be blamed for if one goes missing." huffing over the next part. "you still haven't told them."

"I know." replying softly to that. "do you know what happened to the principal's kid?"

"it was no lion that killed that child. the child's father was not morning his death either. He was in quite a panic over the phone not to long ago about your questions. He was among those hunting for children. Sounded like his son overheard something he shouldn't have and ran. They couldn't let him tell, tried to cover his death, and it worked. Feeding the body to a lion helped the death be glanced over as an accident.

You're questions made them paranoid that you knew something. That you would tell somebody. He was planning to have you write that paper, then be rid of you, but I wasn't going to allow that." expressions changing from agitated to grinning happily.

"the principal was in on it? Do you know who else is?"

"many are. Most I am unable to touch except for brief moments. They repeatedly enter and leave the edges of Derry. Only small groups actually enter the town for errands to their plans.

"there are a lot of kids going missing all around the quarry. Is that where they meet?"

"I have yet to check the quarry. It seems far too difficult to herd children through there or to drive vans full of them. I have mainly watched them gather in warehouses. A few out in the woods driving by van convoys on the flat dirt trails."

"me and the guys were going to search the quarry today. Then that all fell apart."

"I know." giving her a quick glare. Knowing the reason they were looking in the first place.

"I am sorry." she apologized.

"I will not hold a grudge over it, child." scoffing. "don't go snooping around the quarry. You'd all be prime targets to pick off if that is where the men hunt."

"...you said I was your child."

"what?"

"back with the principal you asked him what he was doing with **your** child." Beverly smiled about it.

"so what? You suffer so many accidents I may as well be your babysitter since our deal."

"you sure treat me like I am yours." teasing the clown.

"i do not!"

"feeding, caring, watching, guarding-"

"because you can't care for yourself! You're like a stupid little bird who fell from the nest. hopelessly flopping on the ground for a cat to come end its misery!" hissing at her.

Teasing *IT* further she mumbled. "says the cat caring for a little bird."

"I may not be able to eat you, but I can re-break your ankle!"

"why? You'd have to fix it again." not taking his threat seriously.

"I would, then id be stuck with you longer. Your side is shut and your ankle fixed. You can fuck off out of my nest now!" growling at her.

"my aunt is going to have a heart attack." realizing how long she's been gone. "... can you bring me home?" softly asking him after regretting her teasing that made him angry. Hearing him grumble something indistinguishable before standing.

"get up so we can go." not watching as Beverly got to her feet. Her smiling down at standing on her ankle with no pain.

"thank you." smiling toward him.

"lets go." ignoring the thanks to walk on. Along the way he informed her. "your aunt won't notice a thing. Head straight to your room and it'll be like you've been there for hours to her."

"okay." replying as they approached the RV park gate. Holding his hand out in front to stop her.

"let me get the threading off before you go in." looking over where her knife wound used to be. Delicately pulling the threading away similar to a bundle of cotton stretching apart. Revealing the clean, fully healed, area of skin. "there." saying with a toss aside of the bundled up threading. The bundle dissolving before it could even hit the dirt.

"wow." Beverly marveled at the mark less healing. Rubbing over the spot to make sure there was absolutely no scarring left over.

"your amazed at simple healing?" he scoffed, waving her off to go home. "and fucking tell them!" he shouted as she walked the last bit home.

"oh boy." she breathed out at the thought. Along with thinking over what *IT* said about going inside. "straight to your room." she thought while taking a nervous grip of the cold metal handle. Slowly opening the RV door to see her aunt cooking by the stove. Back facing

forward without seeming to notice Beverly opening the door. The young girl slipped in as she curiously watched her aunt seeming unaware as she crossed into her bedroom. Shutting the door behind her with barely a click sound. She managed to get out half a breath before jumping at her door being knocked on.

"dinners ready." her aunt announced. Beverly paused to regather herself inside the room. Spotting her school bag set upon her bed. A smile twitching on her face knowing Pennywise had to have dropped it off for her. Beverly reopened the door wearing a smile. Not entirely sure if she was happy to have gone completely missing for hours without notice. Or even how *IT* stopped her aunt from noticing her sneaking in after so long.

She sat down at the table where a plate was set in front of her. Hot stuffed eggplant covered in gooey melted cheese. Taking up a few bites to enjoy the food into slowing downing down at the sight of her aunts expression. The women looked worried or even a little grimly down at her food.

"are you okay?" Beverly asked concern.

"oh, I am fine dear. I got accepted for a second job today." her aunt answered. Taking a slow first bite.

"what's wrong with it?"

"its a night job. Means that I'll probably only see you in the mornings before school … will you be alright while alone? I can get a babysitter to check in during the night-" her aunt explained.

"no, I'll be fine. I haven't been afraid of the dark for years." trying to give a confident chuckle to ease her aunts worry's.

"are you sure?"

"yeah, I'll be fine." eating a few more bites of her dinner. "can always call the guys for anything

"if you're sure. I made dinner for tomorrow ahead of time. It'll be in the fridge and you'll only have to heat it up." returning to eating her own meal a little less worried. There was not much talking after that.

Beverly heading to bed with thoughts about how to deal with tomorrow.

The new morning came to awaken Beverly for school. Greeting her aunt on her way out to school. The older woman reminded her she won't be around till later in the night after Beverly would have long gone to bed. Reminding her of the dinner sitting in the fridge for her to reheat later. Beverly simply nodded her head while her mind was focused elsewhere. Planning things out on her walk to school.

"they'll ask about my leg first, maybe. Or they'll start on why I never showed up. The leg is easier to explain in that it's just better now. As for why a no show I could be honest … for the most part … you have to tell them sometime. Goddammit!" scolding her self on fear of telling the deal.

"maybe I can adjust the deal to only be between me and Pennywise. Keep this secret down." closing her eyes for a moment until she heard one of the guys call her name. Surprised to see them driving down the road in mikes rust bucket.

"Bev!" bill shouted out the window. "w-w- what happened yesterday? You never showed up." he asked.

"a really long story. Something serious is going on and it's definitely not *IT* snatching up children around here." she spoke gravely serious on the matter.

Almost everyone was leaning out the window now. "what happened?!" they all said in unison.

Mike spoke over all of them. "hop in so we can all talk on the way to school." bill about to set out of the front seat for Beverly to take it when he realized her crutch was gone.

"you don't need your crutch? He asked. She shook her head no.

"I feel it's better enough now. The crutch was becoming more of an annoyance than helpful." walking up to squeeze into the back seat by Ben, Eddie, and Richie.

"so what happened to you? Mrs. Satan keep you locked away at

school again?" Richie jokes.

"the principal tried to kill me." she dropped the bomb on all of them. Mike half slamming the breaks at the news. Coming to a more gentle stop in the middle of the road. They all turned to her in shock waiting to hear more.

"I saw his sons poster on that wall and read how he disappeared. It said he disappeared 2 days before the principal was told about it. When I went to detention he was there and I asked him. "why wasn't he told when his son was missing on the first day." he got upset and left for a while. I was about to leave before he told me to stay late like my first detention.

I thought it was because I struck a nerve with his son and stayed. He left and later came back with a knife. He threatened me to write a murder confession letter. When I said no he tried dragging me out back to a van. But ..." her voice died off. Trying to explain what happened next.

"how'd you get away?" bill asked.

" and where is Mr. alko now?" Mike added on.

"I don't know." she answered. "I managed to get away when he tried getting me into the van. I didn't stick around and ran straight home."

"shit." Richie breathed.

"why don't you think IT did it?" Eddie asked. "Did you see all those missing posters. Like, ya the principal freaked out, but his kid did just die and you asked about it right after the news he got. Maybe he went through some mental break down."

" … I heard him on the phone. Talking to someone about me and why I was asking questions. He was afraid of me asking them. Assuming I was onto something involving him. He didn't even care for his son. He wanted me gone and I am not fully sure why." she tried covering a gap in her story on what news Pennywise gave her. Without involving *IT* and them crossing together.

"like a c-c-cover up?" bill asked.

"yeah." she nodded. "Some people out there are stealing kids and I think alkos kid heard something. He ran away out into the woods in the middle of the night from a counselor. Why? That doesn't sound right. Mr alko knew his son was gone before the police showed up. I am sure of it."

Mike started the car rolling again as he added. "who ever is taking kids they're really stalking around the quarry. Makes sense if you want to hide kidnapped kids in the maze. Even if they get away from the kidnappers in there, they'll get lost or die trying to find the exit."

"we have to go check it out." bill spoke.

"you crazy!" Eddie exclaimed. "wander around the quarry looking for psychos in caves?!"

"n-n-not in caves. Around the area for people or something. W-w-with how many kids are going missing within a few days t-t-t-."

"less words bill or it'll take all day to explain!" Richie growing just as frustrated with bill as Eddie was.

"lots of people. Lots of activities." bill shortened. "s-s-so many kids going missing must mean a big operation going."

"he's right." Mike agreed. "when they take kids they have to hold them somewhere. A hideout to transport them to for hiding. Then transport someplace else when the coast is clear of cops searching. With all that back and forth we should spot someone moving around or driving away without getting close."

"and then what?!" Eddie spoke up. "call the cops? Like that'll help. They sit around eating doughnuts while a bank is getting robbed!"

"we have to do *some*thing." Beverly snapped.

"we're going tonight only to watch. O-o-okay?" bill stuttered out.

"would be easier to convince all our parents to move from Derry." Richie jokingly threw out.

"maybe for you." Eddie played along.

"Whoa, look at that." Mike announced as they arrived to the school surrounded by police cars.

"d-did you tell?" bill looked back to Beverly.

"no, not even my aunt. You guys are the first to know." she answered.

"they're not gonna let me drive up. You guys have to walk from here and I'll meet you all later." Mike looked to all of them. They nodded with a step out to walk the rest of the way. Stan was already waiting for them out front. Waving them over urgently for a talk.

"you guys hear what happened to Mr. alko?" Stanley spoke nervously.

"n-n-no." bill answered for the group.

"he's dead. They think some animals killed him. I didn't see his body before they took him away in a body bag."

"good riddance! Beverly was almost murdered by him last night." Richie whispered.

"what?!" Stan exclaimed.

Beverly quickly explained the story in whisper. "long story short. I questioned about his son disappearing days before he got the news. He got paranoid and called somebody about me. Tried to force me to write a murder confession on his son. Then tried to steal me in a van when I refused. I got away before he could get me in and I didn't see him after I ran the way home."

"we're staking out the quarry for any weirdo kidnappers. Bev thinks there's a lot more people involved." Richie informed.

"well, we can probably go now. Cops say the schools closed for investigation."

"with the police swarming around I don't think the kidnappers will make a move. We'll have to wait for nightfall no matter what." she gestured to the sky.

"what should we do right now?" asked Richie. Almost immediately

Beverly blurted out her plan.

"I am going to search along the river. See if anything weird going on around there."

"okay, then we should all split and look around the town." bill agreed. "r-r-rich go check around the elementary school. Eddie can check the baseball field nearby. B-b-ben can go check around the theater. I'll run home to call mike so we can drive around town. D-d-don't go too far away from other people and come find us if there's anything w-w-weird."

"okaygreatbye!" Beverly shouted in a quick blurb before rushing off. Not giving the guys the chance to question why specifically the river. She was rushing off to speak with it again. Thinking that maybe he had more information to give.

She rushed down to the river shore. Following down along it to the drainage pipe. Where she followed the same tunnels to the underground nest. Slowing down her run when she reached the center. Glancing over the webbing spread along the floor. Taking small steps outward onto the soft webbing. Despite walking on it before she was still nervous that it would cling. as a real web would to prey landing upon it.

She didn't get more than a few feet when IT made her jump at his sudden appearance. "what are you doing here?" questioning behind her.

10. Accidents

She whipped her head around to face him. Letting her heart settle before speaking.

"I came here to find out if you know anything else about the men. Me and the guys are going tonight to look over the quarry."

"I told you **I am** going to the quarry. **You** are not allowed to go. I know not much else. Especially since what happened last night. Their meetings have stopped with activity slowing down greatly … shouldn't you be in school?"

"schools shut down after what happened. not allowed? Says who?" raising an eyebrow at the tall clown.

"says **me**." he huffed. Walking by toward the nest.

"who made you the boss of me?"

" **I did**."

"and whyyyy is that?" growing more confused.

"because you keep getting yourself into trouble and I don't want you-." he started, cutting himself off. A momentary look of pain flashing across his face. Twisting it quickly back toward something serious. " **you** can't enter the quarry. Leave it at that." speaking seriously toward her.

"me and the guys have to go! We're tired of letting bad things happen. We don't want to be like everyone else and ignore what's going on!"

" **DO AS I SAY!"** roaring over her. "Stop being stubborn! I will handle it and all of you will stay out of it! Understand?!" glaring down at her. Watching Beverly fidget as her gaze turned away.

"... yes. ..." she mumbled. A quiet moment passing when he spoke in a more calmly manor.

" … are you hungry?" steering the conversation someplace else.

" a little I guess."continuing to mumble.

"wait here then. I'll fetch you something." walking back by her to leave.

"where do you even get the food?"

"I go to the diner and wait till a to go order is placed. I simply grab it before anyone else can."

"you just grab take out trays? Do you even know whats in them when you do?"

"no." he answered. Going around a corner out of sight. Beverly looking back toward the main nesting area.

"he's acting differently." she thought. A moment ago feeling like she was arguing with a parent then some world eater. " he actually sounded concerned for me going to the quarry. What's with the sudden attachment? It can't all be to preserve the deal. *IT* hates humans and doesn't seem the type to attach to "prey" as he calls us."

thinking it over it all seemed vaguely familiar to something she heard in biology class. They talked about natural predators sometimes going against nature. Adopting young from prey they ate almost everyday. "I need to read up on that again. The library has to have books talking about it. Is there even a word for it?" her attention pulled to the sound of footsteps. IT returning with a brown bag of fresh food.

"here." he offered the bag.

She took the bag giving a quick glance inside. Looking back to the clown. "can you take me to the library?"

he glanced away grumbling to himself. "yes." he spoke. Looking back to her with a held out hand. The moment she took it there was a flash of black. Instantly they were there as the blackness disappeared.

"I am not a taxi service. Get your friend to drive you places from now

on." he grumbled. Leaving Beverly alone in the lower basement level of the library. Dropping her off where no one would see their sudden appearance.

She rushed up the stairs, food in hand, toward the nature section. Scanning through shelf upon shelf of books. Looking through various titles of books on insects, farm animals, domestic dogs to various wild creatures. Spotting a selection large animal behavior books that could provide something. Scooping them up to take away to a table. Sitting down to slowly scan through all the pages. Looking for anything similar to what she remembered.

A quarter of the way through her 5th book she was losing hope. Scanning over the remaining books he attention was caught on one with a turtle on the cover. A sense of this book having promise making her skip the others. Flipping through the pages when she came upon a picture of a lion sleeping by a baby gazelle.

Scanning over the large paragraphs before settling on the most important part.

"in nature it is rare predators will adopt and care for prey young. Studies are still being made of why that is, but there are a few theories that have been confirmed.

In the case of caged animals one predator may become a friendly companion to offered prey. Due to being far more lonely at the time over being hungry. Forming an inseparable bond despite the predator still actively hunting.

In the case of wild predators such as a lion will usually involve timing. the predator parent being a female. Along with a burst of specific love hormones.

Female predators are much more likely to adopt prey if they were recently pregnant or suffered a loss of their own young. After birth adoption being higher as the mother is under hormones. These hormones are what develop a parental bond to their children. Sudden traumatic losses can cause unhealthy attachments to adopt other young." she read from the page.

"sounds familiar." remembering back to its eggs rotting in that underground. Continuing to read off the rest of the page.

" bonds may also form between predator and prey if they benefit from each others company.

However these bonds after being made may not always last. The parental predator eventually succumbing to natural instinct to devour the prey. The adoptive parent unable to properly care for their new young. In the case of a lion adopting prey was unable to feed the young animal meat it had brought. Or other eventual predators moving in to finish off the prey."

Beverly shut the book having read what little info was available. Sighing as she looked to the bag of food. "at least *IT* knows how to care for humans, but the book says it never lasts." bringing the food closer. Looking around for library staff that could shoo her out. They didn't like food inside the building.

Opening the trey revealed a fresh stack of pancakes next to bacon. Off to the side was a small plastic container of warm syrup.

"while I am here, maybe I can find a map on the quarry." taking out the plastic spork and knife to cut into the pancakes.

IT may have ordered her not to go, but she wasn't going to listen. Her and the guys were going to do something about the quarry. They weren't going to sit back while more kids are taken. To be sold or abused by who ever in where ever. Maybe if they hurried they could save some children that were taken.

Some time passed with Beverly meeting back up with the guys from their investigations. The sun getting increasingly low to set a red sunlit glow across Derry.

"anything?" bill asked the reform group. Some head shakes and nos were giving. Beverly giving some information she found.

"I found some time to check the library for anything on the quarry. A few maps, but they're all really old when the mining first began. There's a few entrances up the river where can start."

"to the rust bucket!" Richie charged off dragging Eddie along to mikes car. Richie, Eddie, Stan, bill, and Ben squeezed into the back. Giving the front seat to Bev with mike in his drivers seat.

"I still don't think it's a good idea. It's going to be pitch black out there. What if one of us falls off a cliff on accident?" Eddie expressed his worry with an opening of his backpack. Filled up on flashlights for them all to take on their stake out hike.

"w-w-w-w-"

"your stutters kicking up bill." Richie shines a flashlight at him. Switching it off right afterwards.

"He thrusts his f-f-f-fists against the post, and still insists h-h-he sees the ghost." the boy repeated in frustration. Calming himself from the adrenaline of the quarry's approach.

"we all stay in groups." he was able to get out. "don't get to f-f-far from one another s-s-s-stay hidden in the shrubs or around trees."

the car drove down the beaten dirt road. The red light of the falling sun shrinking to the pure blackness of light. Mike being forced to slow the car to a crawl on the rough terrain. Carefully avoiding trees that were hard to see with the cars badly yellowed lights. The losers scanning outside the windows into the black forests. Only the nearest of brush highlighted by the cars low light.

"hm hmm … hm hmm … hm hmm." Richie rhythmically hummed.

"r-r-rich this isn't the time to joke!" bill scolded.

"what joke?" the humming boy played innocent. " hm hmm … hm hmm … hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm." he hummed.

"Richie! Stop with the jaws theme! O-o-or i'll punch you again!"

"like to see ya try!" he challenged.

Mike interrupting. "we're here." slowing them to a stop. Shutting the car off to be in total darkness.

Flashlights switching on one by one inside the cramped space. Hearing no sounds of nature in the dead forest. Slowly they stepped out to scan the pitch black surroundings. Bill repeating his stuttering sentence. Eddie taking a puff of his inhaler.

"o-o-okay. Me, Stan, m-m-mike and Eddie will go this way. B-b-Ben, Bev, and Richie go the other." bill directed.

"what are we even supposed to look for? Cars? Mobsters? Moth man?!" Richie groaned when they separated.

Ben shushed him. "we need to stay quiet!" whispering the order.

"why?! You think their blind from our spotlights out in these woods?!" shaking his flashlight wildly to light up trees nearby.

"stop that! We don't need to make it easier for them!" Ben continued whispering.

"careful." Bev interrupted them. "were right next to the river and its got a drop." shining the light down the steep dirt edge. Falling at this point would cause some bad scrapes, but further along a fall would be someones last mistake.

"let's say we do see a car. Then what? Tell the cops "hey, someone driving in the quarry! how do we know that officer? Oh, we only trespassed to spy in the middle of the goddamned night!" our parents will be thrilled to see us escorted home!" Richie whines.

"maybe we'll see kids or maybe that's not the only stuff we're dealing with. What if their big drug dealers with huge things of bricks." Ben getting a little frustrated.

"if that's what we think they are. What are we gonna do?! Find a few black market guns to bust in blasting motherfuckers?"

"no, we gather evidence first. Don't you watch knight rider?"

"that show with the possessed car?"

"it's not possessed! Its suppose to be a super computer car!"

"whatever. Its fucking creepy. I expect and episode where it goes all HAL 9000 on the guys ass! Wasn't the car called Christine?"

"no! It was called kitt! Christine was a horror movie-!"

at this point Beverly had completely tuned out there arguing conversation. "guys … guys! … guyyys!" she shouted at the two far too focused on their talk. "ugh, forget it." she waved off. Trudging on ahead up the steep river side. Scanning across the trees along her path. Stopping in her tracks at a silver reflection of the light back at her. She swallowed the lump in her throat to step toward the strange object. Examining closer she saw a fabric was covering the shiny thing. Grasping part of it to yank away. Noticing the fabric was much larger. Covering a whole white van in the fabric tarp marked in camo pattern. Multiple branches leaned up against it in a purposeful job of hiding it.

"why?" she thought in walking around to the back doors. Clicking the handle discovering it was still open. "this is like the same van principal Alko had." shining the light over the interior. Seeing another shiny object set to the side. A silver heavy case filled with stacks of money left open.

"who would leave this?" speaking to herself. A creepy crawly feeling going up her spine that something was wrong.

Rushing around to the front of the van to still see the guys further down the slope still arguing. She was prepared to call out to them. Painfully shouting when something slammed into her. Knocking her clean off her feet. Dropping the flashlight to land at the sharp drops edge. Beverly managing to reach out and grab some thick roots stringing out the cliff side. Panicking to get back up.

A pair of dark legs leading down to heavy dark boots kicking the only light available far off the cliff. Beverly watching it fall for ages to be swept away by the rapids rushing below. She turned to face the attacker. Seeing just the edge of his figure ready to kick her in the face.

"Beverly!" Richie shouted. Distracting the man from the approaching figure behind.

A loud growl was heard from behind. A pair of burning eyes being the only thing seen when the man turned. A rush of air passing into sounds of powerful shredding. The stranger yelped falling off to the side with a grab to his face. Beverly turned her head at Ben and Richie lights landing on her. She looked back up to aim at pulling herself up. Meeting face to face with Pennywise reaching down to grab her as the rock crumbled underneath. Missing her chance at being hoisted up to fall far down.

Hitting the water painfully as one would landing on "soft" dirt. Painfully swimming up to the surface lightened by flashes of Richie and Bens lights.

"Beverly!" "Beverly!" they both shouted repeatedly as they rushed down the river edge. Failing to keep a light on the girl swiftly forced down river. Plunging under the powerful rushing waters over and over. Body turning numb in the freezing water covered in forming night ice. Choking down mouthfuls of water smashing into her.

It was turning to a point she thought she would die. She was choking water in the pitch black. Couldn't see or even feel the changing surface between freezing water and the open air. Couldn't see the on coming rocks she smashed into. Couldn't see the shore to attempt swimming towards. It was all a black death forcing her down into it in any way possible.

Catching something at her arm she held on for her life. Gasping for air after being yanked free of the freezing water. A rush of escaping death's grasp filling her. Making her sick to her stomach.

"Beverly? Can you talk? Are you okay?" the voice she recognized first. Grabbing a hold of the clown costume fabric to lean up. Coughing and hacking to throw out all the water that invaded her lungs. Shivering in Pennywise's arms far too exhausted to do anything else.

Pennywise was possessively holding her in his arms. Fearing her health pushing aside the fury of her disobeying him. She could have died from that stranger by the van. He had to pick her up and take her home. Her body temperature dangerously low. Covered in cuts from slamming into the rocks.

A flash of light over them both whipping Pennywise's attention toward the source. Aggressively hissing bared crooked teeth. Startling back Richie and Ben who managed to catch up.

"holy shit!" Richie shouted when startled back. Pennywise's body tensed at seeing them instead of the attacker. Assuming they wouldn't believe anything he would try to say. Having no time to even say a word with Beverly's condition. He picked her up to rush into the woods out of sight.

"hey! You clown fucker!" Richie shouted after them. Ben ready to run after them if it weren't for Richie stopping him. "don't separate! That's what *IT* wants! We have to get bill!"

they bolted back up stream. Relentlessly shouting bills name to grab his attention quick.

Bills group look toward Ben and Richie rushing down their side of the river. By their quick flashlight movements they could tell they were running.

"wheres Bev?!" Eddie pointed out one missing. Bill anxiously running over preparing for the worst.

"w-w-w-w- god fuck! - Bev! Where!" he fought with his stuttering to let out the question.

"Pennywise took her!" Richie shouted.

"he ran off into the woods with her!"

"what?!" bill choked wide eyed on the word. "b-b-b-b- fuck- the car!" bill tried directing them to run back to the car.

"where to?!" Mike asked on the way.

"n-n-n-n-n-"

"the crack house!" Richie finished for him. Wasting no time to all cram into the backseat. Mike put the keys in only to hear the engine chug.

"no! Not fucking now!" Mike growled. Turning the key a few more times. No luck, the car was out of commission.

"we can't wait!" Ben exclaimed, getting out of the car. Followed by everybody else. Forced to run all the way back to town straight to Pennywise's lair.

11. Comatose

Beverly was thoroughly wrapped in layers of heavy blankets. Warmed up from her freezing condition out of the rushing river. Suffering through a fast developing fever off a newly developing sickness. Relaxing as best she could in the blankets while in *ITs* nest. Surrounded by its coiling body wrapping around to physically warm her surroundings.

Being scolded by the shouting furious otherworldly creature.

"what did I tell you about going to the quarry?! Didn't I tell you it wasn't safe?! What would have happened if I wasn't there?! You could have been stabbed to death! You could have been kidnapped or drowned in that river! I told you I would handle it!" *IT* roared in a never ending rant down over her.

"what did you think you were doing?! What were you possibly going to do?! Play dead when they pointed their guns?! Do a civilians arrest on them all?! They could have taken you out of Derry where I couldn't help! What then?!" scolding her thoroughly. The girl not daring to say anything. Hoping its ranting would end soon as she developed an aching migraine.

"... I am sorry. ..." she sickly apologized between *IT* taking a breath to start ranting again.

"you're sorry?! You would have been really sorry as a body floating down river!" ranting even more. Breathing out a huge agitated breath.

"you're staying here until your health improves. Understand?" bringing down its anger.

"yes." going along without arguing. Her aunt wouldn't notice her missing while on her late night shift. Being more worried about how the guys were going to react. She remembered enough on that freezing shore of Richie and Ben horrified at seeing the clown alive. Running off with her to, in their mind, kill her. This horrible run of events was now turning into her time of confession. "this is totally

going to go well." sarcastically thinking to herself.

"... where are they?" she gently asked. Wanting to avoid being scolded more.

"they are approaching into the houses front lawn." answering more gently from its enraged scolding tone.

She let out a sigh. No matter how much she thought of how to say it. It all felt too wrong. "I made a deal with *IT* the child eater. Fed my dad to it so it could hunt criminals on its own again." … "how do I make that sound good? What if they leave me? Say that they don't want to be part of the deal and I threw their names in anyway." … "how will *IT* react? I can't go back on my half. I'll have to defend *IT* from them if everything falls apart."

"they're crossing through the tunnels. Won't be long now." *IT* alerted to her.

She took a deep breath to get out from under the covers. Planning to meet them ahead of reaching the center. Only to be stopped.

"get back under the covers!" *IT* snapped.

"I have to talk to them!"

"you can talk from here just fine. You're sick and should stay under the covers. Go back to bed!" *IT* ordered her. Given no room to argue she slumped back under the covers. Watching the piles entrance anxiously to hear the guys running up for her.

"i really think-" she was immediately shushed down.

"you will stay in bed!" hissing the order. Its body puffing up in agitation to its scales flexing forward to look bigger.

"they won't stand talking inside the nest!"

"i will talk outside." holding its head confidently.

"**you?!**" thinking how that was the worst way to tackle this problem.

"yes, since you can't confront them over it. I will." moving its body over to settle at the entrance.

"no! You can't-!"

"they're here. Stay in bed and I will talk." looking back to her then facing forward to crawl out the entrance a few steps further.

The fellow losers rushing down the tunnels. Grabbing whatever they could use for weapons along the way. Skidding to a halt when they saw the webbed over floor. those running more from the back bumping into those stopping in front. Scanning over the new environmental changes leading up to spotting the long spider limbs of *IT* waiting for them at the nest.

"don't touch that! We could get stuck." Stan warned to bill in a whisper about the webbing.

"there's no other way a-a-around. Bev has to be in there and if not we could at least yank some answers from *IT* as to where … i-i-I'll go first." bill whispered back. Stepping out onto the webbing hesitantly using one foot. Sinking down into it from his weight. Reminded him of stepping onto the tarp of a trampoline that bowed under weight, but still held firm enough to walk over. Starting up his repetition of the sentence speaking to calm himself. "still i-i-insists he sees the ghost … he thrusts his fist"

The rest of the group watching him whisper the sentence the further he got. Cautiously they followed his lead onto the webbing. Having seen bill get pretty far without the problem of becoming trapped in the thread.

"what did you do with her?!" bill shouted at the watching creature. The group staying back in case they needed to dodge *ITs* jaws lunging. Weapons at the ready for a viscous fight more ruthless than their last.

"I saved her from drowning in the river. What were you doing in the quarry?!" turning the confrontation around.

"that ain't none of your business!" Richie shouted from behind bill.

Snapping something in the back of *ITs* mind.

"none of my business? **None of my business?!** It is my business when all you children walk into a death trap! You all went into that quarry in the middle of the night! To find what?! Armed men hunting children! Even worse is that you all split apart! Not paying an ounce of attention to your surroundings! Had I not been there to involve myself she would have been dead! While some of you argued!" it scolded them, just as it did with Beverly earlier.

"did any of you stop to think at all? You were all going to charge in without a single idea of where to even start. What to do when you run into something! You all should have been smarter about this! Planned more or at least be prepared for any threats!" continuing to rant it's scolding.

The group of losers standing there looking amongst each other. They had no idea what to do. They expected to face an evil creature laughing at their misery. Not a scolding over what they did.

"gee Edds, your mom looks really different." Richie passing a joke in whisper. This kind of scolding reminding him of others they got.

"**do you think this is funny?!**" *IT* snapped over them from the joke.

"no mam!" Richie shook his head from behind the awkwardly standing losers.

Hearing *IT* ranting even more about the seriousness of everything had Beverly getting out. Squeezing past it to get out. Catching the groups attention.

"are you okay?!" Ben shouted. Whipping *ITs* attention toward her as well.

Puffing up with a hiss. "what are you doing?! Go back to bed?!" *IT* ordered.

"I have to talk with them! Go wait inside!" she ordered back.

"you shouldn't be out of bed!"

"wait inside and I'll be right back!" pushing on the hulking monster in a failed attempt to move it. The grumbling *IT* retreated back inside the den. Leaving her alone to speak to her pack of friends of the serious matter.

"what the fuck Bev!" Richie shouted to her. "We come here to get mauled and rescue you! Not be shouted at by our mom!"

"i know … its weird. I am fine, and *IT* wont do anything either." nervously turning to face them.

"wont do anything?!" bill glared. "t-t-that thing eats kids! What do you mean it wont do anything! What the hell is going on?! What was all of … t-t-that!" gesturing wildly toward where *IT* once stood scolding them. Beverly nervously swallowed.

Taking a deep breath to try explaining. "i … when ... we made a deal." she got out. Seeing them all flinch in shock from the news.

Bill looking the worst. Hurt by being betrayed that his friend helped the monster. "what deal?!" fury showing in his voice. His breath slowly choked on holding back his tears.

"... *IT* was dying …. I wanted to make things better for both sides. *IT* and Derry … I offered *IT* that if it stopped eating kids. Only criminals. That we wouldn't harass it … if there's nothing for *IT* to eat … we would pick someone." her voice dying down.

"... did you feed it?!" the confrontation getting no response had his anger build. "you fed *IT*?! Who was it?!" shouting in her face. Not noticing *IT* watching nearby. "WHO DID YOU FEED TO *IT*?!" he roared with a shove against her. Nearly knocking her down. The rest of them giving passing looks on if they should interfere or stay back.

"WHO?!" bill about ready to shove her again.

"MY DAD!" tears building in her eyes. All of bills anger dropping like a ton of bricks. Breath held in at being unsure how to react to that. The boys knew what her dad was like, but on the other hand she murdered someone. Feeding them alive to a monster who loved to torture its prey. She took another deep breath to explain further.

"I made the deal and was going to feed *some*body to *IT*. I … was having trouble finding someone." keeping honest to what happened. "up to the point I jumped from his car all happened, but I didn't get a sprained ankle. I didn't get away in the woods. It was more serious than that. The bone snapped out of my leg after I landed right on a rock. I was bleeding the entire time I ran down the stream. I honestly didn't plan it to happen. I wanted to get away, that's all. To somehow lose him through the trees or in the pipes when I reached them." holding back tears from the memory. How close she was to dying.

"he kept up the entire way. No matter what he was around the corner. Shouting at me to come back while holding that gun. I ran all the way to the nest to hide." gesturing to the pile. "he grabbed me ... then *IT* … I lost so much blood at that point I blacked out. Woke up to *IT* having fixed my leg as much as he could. *IT* brought me home after that. *IT* protected me from the principal too and that's how I know of the men taking children in the first place." she finished.

"how do we know *ITs* not making stories and scenarios to cover for itself?" Ben stepped in.

"the first night of detention I was stalked home by some men. *IT* walked me home and that's the same time Mr. alkos son went missing. And that's not all either. There was a van at that cliff covered in a camo tarp and branches. The back had a whole case of money in it. I fell off that cliff because someone attacked me! If *IT* hadn't had attacked him I probably wouldn't have survived the river as long as I did."

"fuckin great! *ITs* not killing kids, but people are. Why the hell isn't *IT* killing the guys or going into the quarry over us?!" Richie asked.

"**i tried.**" *IT* hissed from the inner nest. Beverly looking guilty over the situation. Yet, *IT* was having complications finding the men. More people searching meant they were more likely to find *something*. *IT* searching alone could take days more before anything was found. Time couldn't be wasted on saving all the kids being taken on a daily basis.

"*IT* warned me not to go, but I couldn't sit by. *IT* was having trouble finding them on what energy it had. Especially after Mr. alko was

killed." she confessed.

"thanks for letting us know of the whole plan." Richie sarcastically spoke. Getting a swift elbow to the ribs from Eddie. "ow, what the hell?!"

"we wouldn't have done it any other way." Mike defended Beverly's actions. "Kids are going missing left and right for the past few days. Whoever's doing this needs to be found, fast. Even if *ITs* looking for them, does that mean we're going to sit around ignoring it all?"

"no. we will look." bill spoke up again.

"you'll do what?!" *IT* peeked from the nest.

"no,they'll walk!" Beverly blurted out. Really not wanting for them all to be scolded all over again. "they'll walk home." clarifying a bit more. Shooing the guys along to start leaving.

"we'll walk you home first. You don't look so good." ben offered. Beverly's health deteriorating under all the recent stress. Throat becoming horse the longer she talked. Sweat building on her clothes caused by the burning fever refusing to drop.

"no, I am staying here. *IT* cant help me get better." her answer catching bills attention.

"y-y-you can't stay here with *IT!*"

"*IT* wont do anything. I'll be fine."

"we're not leaving without you." whispering through grit teeth. Refusing to let Beverly waved him off to be stuck underground alone with *IT*.

" I am staying." stating her stance.

"then were staying." bill spoke for them all. Eddie looking ready to have a panic attack. Receiving a back pat from Richie as he breathed from his inhaler. Stan having his own silent crisis with a thousand yard stare, but not protesting.

"what about all you're parents?" she pointed out.

"what about you're a-a-aunt?" he asked back.

"she has a late night shift for work."

"nobody will n-n-notice as long as we're back by morning."

"oookay, if you're sure." rubbing her head of a headache. Walking back into the nest around *IT* to rest back down in the blankets. The rest of them keeping post outside the entrance. Ben and bill doing the most night watching over *IT* and Bev.

Alone with her thoughts they buzzed around what Ben said. Maybe *IT* was setting things up. It was convenient because it was there whenever something wrong happened. Could *IT* be working with someone else. Someone who also has ill intentions for children? She made a deal with *IT,* why couldn't someone else? Her sickness worsening at the thoughts.

"ugh, I need to sleep. Tomorrow I need to skip school. No doubt about that with how I am feeling." throwing off her covers to cool off from her own roasting body.

Closing her eyes to slowly fall asleep. Time passing gnawing at her nerves. "guess no sleep for me." opening her eyes.

Her heart spiking into her throat at not seeing anything but pure darkness. No *IT,* no walls of toys, not even a floor of blankets where she rested earlier. "blind?!" the thought passed along as did a sparkling white light. Sitting up to stare at the floating flare of white light. Seeing more floating lights pass by. Clustering together in dazzling masses.

Seeing more in the distance appear looking more like the vastness of open space. filled with sparkling stars of various colors floating by. She stood up slowly from her seated spot. Looking down into the dark void never ending below her feet.

"where am I?" gazing around her in wonder. Afraid to move on the lack of flooring below. A large glowing light flooding in behind her. Turning to face the source she expected to be another floating light.

Stuck in awe after seeing a flying massive turtle. Its body made up of colorful various black, white and fiery opals. Glowing off it was a calming blue light. The mere presence of this great turtle bringing Beverly's fever down.

"greetings." the turtle gently spoke to her. Giving a light wave with one flipper. Gazing up toward the creature she remembered mike mentioning a turtle he saw in his dreams.

"are you Maturin?"

"yes." moving himself gently as if drifting in a lightly flowing sea.

"why are you here? You usually visit mike."

"you've been ill for a few days."

"a few days?" the time being wrong to her. "I've only been sick a few hours."

"time works differently for you. you've been asleep for these past few days."

we'er actually approaching the end now. :v/

12. Recovery

"what's happening? Why are you here?!" her chest tightening from fear. Was this a sign she was dying? Was the turtle here to help her along? Maybe he was here instead to help her back? Could he even do either of those?

"my brother tried to care for you. He's not built well to care for things, unfortunately." the large turtle spoke gently. What he said not easing her thumping heart.

The book she read saying this would happen. The adoptive parent unable to care for its new child. It was a matter of time before something happened between them.

"he really tried easing your sickness, but he knows he cannot fix this. It has gotten too far for him to fight back." calmly explaining the situation to the sick girl. "I was surprised by him asking me for help."

"he asked you to heal me?" surprised herself at hearing that.

"yes. An amazing leap for someone who usually despises me the same as humans. I assume your deal went really well since he's grown so attached?"

"yes. ..." swallowing a lump in her throat at the thought of the deals details.

"... don't feel too bad." the turtle comforted her. Aware of the deal and her actions to set it in stone. "he is right when he says it must be *some*one. You and me both would rather he not, but it is not possible for him. An unfortunate effect of nature in our world you see."

"... will he keep his deal?" she asked. Thinking that maybe the turtle could answer.

"he does want to hold the deal for you. Even if he didn't, he has no choice."

"why?"

" cosmic beings must be held to their responsibilities. If we weren't our actions would cause much unneeded chaos for everyone in every universe. When he made that deal, he knows very well that breaking it would be death for him."

"do breaking contracts always mean death when broken? Will all of us die if we break it?"

"no and no. the deal was made to let him live. The deal is now attached to his life. As a cosmic being, it's only so strictly attached to him. Not all of you, which is why he wanted you to tell so badly. Refusing to tell you exactly the reason why. Any of you break the deal and he'll have no leg to stand on in defense."

"I didn't know that." guilt stabbing her heart. "no wonder he was so worried about it."

"he would have never told you. It takes time to get anything out of him, I should know."

"thank you, for talking with me."

"no problem. You'll be heading back now." he smiled lightly.

"wait! Do you know where all the children being stolen are?!"

"no, unfortunately. My view on Derry is limited to the surroundings of my brother. I tried warning you ahead of time when the principal attacked. In case my brother had trouble reaching you in time."

"warn me?" looking back to that event. She didn't remember ever hearing a warning or a sign- "wait, the carved turtles on the desk." remembering the image in the wood. Remembering back to another turtle made of chalk. The one that drew her attention to the river. To the drainage pipe leading to *IT*.

"did you set me up to make a deal with *IT*?" glaring up at the floating turtle up high.

"I admit I may have *suggested* you to visit him, but not to make a deal. I had no idea what you would do. I knew he wasn't a threat in his condition and I knew you were a smart girl. I wanted him to have a

chance to be happy. You were the perfect one to make it possible." raising its flippers up in celebration. "now here we are."

"heh, better not tell him that when I get back … thank you." she smiled.

"I must warn you. It won't feel like you're better when you wake. Give it an hour to let it catch up." waving her goodbye. The turtle getting farther away same as all the stars flowing around her. The blackness disappearing to her waking under the covers. Back in *ITs* nest lightly lit up by the orange glowing wagon. Sitting herself up having her feel the soreness of her body. Aching under the flu attacking her. Coughing out her sore throat when she tried to swallow some spit.

ITs scales flexed forward at the noise. The large insects head swinging around to examine her.

"you're awake!" *ITs* voice full of relief filled happiness. "how do you feel?"

"still sick, but improving." smiling despite her voice scratching on her throat like rusty nails. Her smile dropping at the sight of *IT*. The wheezing of its breath as bad as the day she first made the deal. Limbs shaking to hold itself up. Or limply laying across the bedding.

"are you okay?" Beverly hit by concern asked up to *IT*.

"I'll be fine." doing a poor job of lying past its wheezing.

"have you gone out at all since I got sick?"

"... no … I've been keeping your body from wasting away in your sleep. You don't have to worry about anything. The school thinks you're dealing with a family emergency. Your aunt still thinks you've been going to school." steering the conversation along.

"have you eaten anything?" her voice quiet on the question.

"... not yet. ..." *ITs* voice the same softness.

"I'll get you someone." nervous about fetching another meal, but after

what *IT* did. she couldn't allow him to waste away. *IT* opened its mouth to object. Shutting it at accepting the offer it desperately needed right now. Its condition having been let go far too long to hunt.

" … Maturin says I'll be better soon." making sure to let *IT* know.

the mention of the turtles name souring *ITs* expression instantly. "how long?" *IT* asked. A minor growl escaping its throat.

"an hour." the answer made *IT* grumble.

"an hour? … lazy turtle could have shortened it … not like he's doing anything else." grumbling to avoid giving his brother any sort of praise. Attention brought back to Beverly asking him a question.

"what time is it?" the girl having long lost how much time had passed. At least able to guess it was Monday.

"6 in the morning."

she thought over the timing. "by the time I reach school I'll be fine again." taking a breath to stand.

"what are you doing? Sit back down!"

"I need to go to school." she answered.

"you're still sick! Did you completely miss the whole thing of you being on death's door?! Inches from death and you want to go do work?!"

"I've been gone long enough and I need to find … somebody. Besides, I am sure the guys are missing me. Did they ever cause you trouble?"

"yes." *IT* growled. "they blamed me for causing your sickened sleep. Tried to take you away to the hospital, but you wouldn't have made it far out of my nest. I had to keep you here to prevent your health from sinking like a rock."

"it would be better I tell them its not then … I now know your more stuck in this deal then I am … I want to make sure they know you

won't be any trouble. Okay?" working to convince *IT*.

IT grumbled to itself more on the "stupid turtle blabbing". Sighing a "very well."

"thank you." smiling up to *IT*.

An hour later Bev was making it back to school. Backpack on with an overly huge fresh lunch bag in hand. Despite her saying it wasn't needed *IT* managed to fetch her a few fresh lunches anyway. A bag filled with 4 full meals that she hadn't been able to check yet.

"Beverly?!" she heard Stan shout. Turning her head to face him had her swarmed by the guys instantly. Receiving all sorts of hugs from each of them.

"wait, how do we know this aint Pennywise messing with us?!" Richie accused.

"shut up Richie or your not getting any of my lunch!" lightly shoving the boy.

"oh shit! It is her! … what lunch you got anyway?" staring down to the big grocery bag she was carrying.

"haven't checked yet-" interrupted by being asked questions.

Bill started the questions first. "what happened to you? You're health tanked after you fell asleep! Do you know you've been out for 3 days?!"

"yes, and it wasn't Pennywise's fault." wanting to get that out of the way. "he honestly was doing his best to help me, but couldn't. He even called the turtle to help me when he couldn't."

"the turtle mike sees?" Stan asked.

"yes." she nodded. "I was able to talk to him while asleep. Asked him if *IT* will keep his promise. He says he will. I also asked about our problem and he didn't have anything." leaving out the part that *IT* would die if broken. "what's been going on since I went out? Found anything else?"

"no luck." Ben answered sullen.

"we've scoured every tunnel we could find in that quarry. Tracks are everywhere, but there's always nothing at the end of them.

"we also got a new principal. Today we're having an assembly to greet him or whatever." Stan tossed in.

"it's the only way we can even see him. He's been locked away in his office ever since he showed up last Friday." Eddie dramatically threw his hands up letting them drop right back down.

"stuck at square one then. Have more kids gone missing?" the looks they gave her confirming there had.

" … your aunt didn't give you t-t-t-that food, did she?" bill approaching the subject hesitantly.

"no." she answered. Hesitant herself to bring up the feeding issue. "you know, I was in a coma and *IT* worked really hard to keep me alive … it didn't eat then so … we have to … feed it." her voice dying as a lump formed in her throat.

"feed *IT?!"* the boy was taken aback. "a-a-a-are you serious?! We c-c-c-cant murder someone to feed *IT!"*

"*IT* has no choice. The turtle confirmed that. I made a deal that I would feed him when there is nothing to eat. Help me, or I'll do it myself." standing her ground.

Before bill could shout at her Richie spoke up. "*IT* only eats criminals right? That's the point of the whole contract thingy, right? It's easy to feed him! We just gotta find the criminal ring and then he'll get a big ole buffet!"

"that's if we find it in the first place!" Stan shouted. Quieting down at hearing how loud he blurted out in front of the school. Changing to a whisper on what he said next. "We don't have any clues, locations, or someone to question where they are!"

"we could try scoping out around the camps kids were taken from." Beverly threw out as a suggestion.

"t-t-tried." bill shook his head. "no luck." their conversation ended by the loud blaring school bell. An announcement over the intercom across the school yards informing students.

"to all students, head to the assembly room to greet your new principal. Classes will continue as normal starting at period 1." the announcer ended.

"dammit! I wanted to skip first period." Richie whined.

"what did you expect?" Eddie snickered. "assembly couldn't possibly be that long. "hey kids here's your new dictator!" " the boy joked. Hooking Richie into going along.

" some proud volunteer holding up "please applause" signs or else they get detention!" hugging his friend close as they walked to the assembly.

"a new challenger a-a-approaches. School dictator vz t-t-tv star rich Richie of 1000 voices! Applause cards please!"bill laughed along.

"won't be much of a fight!" Richie laughed.

"hope so, I'll be betting on you!" Beverly opened the door for them to get in.

"what do ya mean? You're gonna be my tag team partner Dorothy Mc-one leg!"

"tss, one leg? I think you need new glasses!" walking down the aisle to grab their seats.

The crowd of kids talking up until the school secretary stepped on stage. Hushing all the talking rumble to be silent. Starting to go on, on how everyone is sad about what happened to the last principal. His heart will remain in the walls of the school. Many other things all the kids had stopped paying attention to.

All the losers slumped in their chairs. Richie secretly doing school work he forgot up till now. Ben made the fortune teller paper game. Unexcitedly playing between Stan and bill. Eddie seeming to be the only one paying any attention.

A barely enthusiastic applause sounding as the new principal was introduced. A tall man in a blue suit walking onto stage. Nothing interesting of the man walking to the pedestal. Then he turned to face the crowd of seated kids. Giving off a better look at his face. Or at least half of it.

One side covered in large white wrappings. The difference immediately catching Beverly's full interest now. Sitting forward completely on guard of the new man.

"that's the guy who knocked me off the cliff!" whispering urgently to the others.

Ben almost dropped his paper game. "really?! Are you sure?"

"Pennywise scratched his face! Has to be him!" she pointed subtly toward the man.

"what if it's not? He could have bandages for something else. Maybe he's got a skin condition?" Eddie pointed out.

"we're gonna find out!" bill stated.

"how?" Stan asked from the end.

"ask, or rip it off if we h-h-have to. If *IT* did scar him. We'll know right away by looking."

"you're seriously going to randomly rip off some guys medical bandages?! What if eddies right?!"

Richie paused his fast scribbling of homework answers. "and what if Dorothy's right?" gesturing to Bev. "Do you **really** want a child murderer as principal? We take those bandages and worse case scenario he **is** a murderer. The other we just look like assholes."

"when should we talk to him?" Ben looked to bill. Beverly interrupting bill before he could answer.

"right now after the assembly."

"w-w-w-we can't-" bill was interrupted by her again.

"every day more and more kids are going missing. We have to catch him now! Confront him while he's in public where he can't do anything! We can get some information out of him!"

bill nodded on the points Beverly gave. Looking to the other guys for any objections. It didn't take long before they nodded in agreement.

"d-d-don't go to class. S-s-straight to the principal's office. All of us." bill handed out the plan. "we'll all confront him. G-g-get those bandages off f-f-f-first thing." nervously looking to the man stepping off stage to leave."

"now might be better." Richie whispered. Shoving things into his backpack to sneak to the isle. Ignoring the others protests as he sneaked out the back door. Seeing him gone they slowly followed behind in sneaking out one at a time. Catching up to him down the cleared hallways. Finding the newly appointed principal heading to his office. As soon as he passed through the door they all rushed in after.

"kids? What are you doing in here?" the bandaged man asked. Confused to the group of 6 kids swarming in.

"how'd you get that injury?" Ben pointed to the man's wounded face. The man was taken off guard by the sudden question.

"have any of your parents told you it's rude to ask such questions?" the principal swept away the question. "go back to the assembly before I tell your parents you're running the halls out of class." he ordered on an overly heavy threat.

"was it from something in the woods?" Beverly questioned him more firmly. Her question flipping a switch inside the man. His softer expression turning hard holding an aggressive stare down to her.

"an accident." the man stated. Holding his dagger eyes on Bev. "if all of you don't go off soon I'll be handing out deten- AHH!" he shrieked as Eddie nicked the side of his face with a pair of small clippers from his bag. Shredding the bandage fabric enough for it to loosen. Beverly grabbing the rest to yank the dangling fabric the man tried to hold on.

The removal of the fabric revealing exactly what Beverly suspected. 4 massive claw marks deeply gouged along his face. Crossing over one eye that had a 2nd round patch to cover the injured organ.

"you attacked me by that van!" Beverly roared.

"so what?!" the scarred man roared back. "i know **you**. I know **all** of you. Beverly marsh, Bill Denbrough, Ben Hanscom, Eddie Kaspbrak, Stan Uris, and Richie Tozier. I've read every child's record here and I know that all of you don't have the cleanest. I also know you're not well thought of by anyone here." he smiled.

"Especially you miss marsh. Your record is quite … **fun.** Possibly … **useful.**" the grin he gave her making their skin crawl.

"you fucking watch it!" Richie snapped at the man.

"or else what?!" he challenged Richie back. "what are you kids going to do? Complain to police I got an injury? You have nothing on me. No ones going to believe a pack of snot nosed kids who are known trouble makers" striding to sit behind his desk.

"no ones going to listen. Go back to the assembly and forget you saw anything. Or else some things will have to be considered … like a price … some will be more valuable than others and the rest will have to be let go." shooting Beverly another skin crawling look.

"after all … kids go missing aaaalllll the time." he grinned.

his grin bashed right off his face by bill using a large golden trophy.

"holy shit bill! You murdered him!" Richie pointed his arms at the principal's body.

"nope, he's still breathing. I can see his chest rising. I bet he'll be out cold for at least an hour." Eddie crouched next to the man. Pointing to the rising of the downed man's chest.

"i d-d-did hit him with the football trophy." holding up the heavy award with a life sized gold football attached to its top.

"what should we do with him? We can't just tie him to a chair here."

Stan looked between bill and the knocked out man.

"... we take him to *IT*."

13. Farewell

"rich, c-c-call mike. Emergency pick up!"

"how are we all going to fit in the car?! We barely fit as is unless were attaching him to the front like a dead deer!" doing as he was told despite the truth to the mentioned issue.

"s-s-some will have to walk. Bev, me, and Ben w-w-will hold him in the car back seat. Stan can sit in the front for back up.

"why do we gotta walk?!" Richie argued while waiting on the phone.

"n-n-n-not the time!" bill snapped. Digging through the principal's desk. Happy to have found a roll of duct tape. Coming over to start wrapping the man's arms while Beverly covered his mouth.

The bell ringing again through the halls announcing the assembly was over. Hearing kids pass by the office. Stan bringing up their next problem. "are we really going to drag him through the school halls and out to a car?!"

"could we do it like that movie "Weekend at Bernie's" and puppeteer his body around?" Richie got out between talking to mike.

"uhh, we can put him on the chair and cover him." Ben suggested.

"thats t-t-t-oo obvious. Teachers could stop us."

"what about those film class carts with the dark tarps?" suggesting next.

"y-y-yeah. That could work."

"I'll go! It's on the way to the nurse so nobody will stop me." Eddie rushed out the door.

"mikes on his way!" Richie hung up the phone. The group left to wait as Eddie ran back with a film cart. Slipping back into the room with the dark cart. The cart resembling a box with a low level toward the ground and a higher top. Making space easy to transport large

camera equipment or lots of heavy boxes.

They picked up the guys body to shove him in the open box. Taping him to the box to hold him as they slipped on the dark tarp cover meant to protect electronics from the sun. Eddie peeked back out into the now empty halls waving them to go forward. They rushed the hidden principal out to the back exit to the staff parking lot. Meeting up with mike to help them shove the scarred man in.

"my moms gonna kill me when she gets a call from school about ditching class." Eddie spoke between puffs of his inhaler.

"who's gonna call her? The principal?" Richie chuckled.

"uh, aside from the fact were kidnapping your new principal. Rich was very vague on what the hell is going on." Mike growled out huffs of air as he helped hoist the man into the car.

"he's the one who attacked me at the river, but got clawed by Pennywise. We're taking him to Pennywise to get answers out of him." Beverly explained.

"oh boy. Well, that'll definitely work." shutting the car door for them.

"meet you at the drainage pipe!" Eddie shouted. Running off with Richie on their own path to the drainage pipe.

"park by the bridge. We'll walk from t-t-t-there."

as soon as mike stopped the car they hoisted the man from the car. Taking long enough getting down the rocky river hill for Eddie and Richie to catch up. Joining in on helping to drag the man down river.

"cant the clown come out and take him?!" Richie grumbled as they went down the piping.

"Richie less w-w-w-whineing more hoisting." bill grumbled back. "AHH, FUCK!" he yelped after getting a kick to the face. They all dropped the newly awakened struggling man. The small rings of duct tape snapped off in the man's fight.

"what the hell is wrong with you kids?!" the man roared. Seeing the

determination in their eyes to recapture him he fled down the piping. Not realizing the kids were chasing him down a certain path. Or even stopping to check why the floor was covered in a webbing material.

He slowed his run past the mountainous pile of toys. The back of his mind screaming something was wrong. That he should run the other way. The thoughts mistakenly pushed aside in assumption that only the kids were hunting him. A harmless group of kids who at most would tie him up. Not noticing the large movement crawling out.

A large black clawed hand stretching from the pile swiftly swatted him down. Pinning him down like a mouse trapped under a cats clawed paw.

The kids catching up. Beverly in the lead shouting. "don't eat him!"

"he's that male from the river cliff side." *IT* hissed down at the pathetic human trapped under his claws.

"I know, but we need answers from him first." looking up to *IT* back down to the pinned man.

"where are all the kids taken?" questioning him.

He stayed silent. Nervously looking between the floor and up to *IT*. The large creatures having multiple eyes appear across its face to stare down the male. Refusing to answer Beverly's question had *IT* literally pushing for one. Crushing his hand down to the point the man couldn't breath. Releasing to let the man wheeze in desperately for air.

"answer!" *IT* demanded.

"they're in the quarry." begrudgingly answering in the most generic of ways. Receiving another painful crushing under the hand. "fuck, fuck, stop!" the man yelped as *IT* grew more precise in its crushing. Aiming to snap a few ribs or a couple limbs. "there's a new mining tunnel! We made one to branch off straight out of Derry. It'll be finished soon and all the kids will be taken out by the truckload."

"where?" Beverly asked next.

"ugh!" the man hissed under the painful weight above. "its hidden behind the offices, blockaded by fake rubble."

"hear that?" she looked to the others. "time to go."

"no! I'll be going. You stay here!" *IT* protectively ordered.

"what?! We have to go! We can help!" she argued.

"no!" *IT* snapped. "stay here, or go back to school. You're not allowed near the quarry until this snake infestation is cleared." picking up the scared man in his grip. Keeping a crushing hold on him as the large insect left through the tunnels. All the kids were sure the man wouldn't last long out of their view.

"why does *IT* treat you like its your mom?" Ben looked to her.

"I think it's because … I found it next to …. some … eggs." she admitted.

"eggs?! *IT* h-h-had eggs?!" bill questioned.

"ITs a lady?! We beat up and ugly women?! Hear that Edds?! We beat up an ugly pregnant lady!" Richie half joked in shock.

"yes, eggs and *ITs* not a girl. *ITs* whatever it wants to be." she answered.

"w-w-w-where are the eggs now?! Are they going to h-h-h-hatch soon?!"

"no, they were definitely dead. Some were shriveled up and others were popped open to leak rotten ooze."

"I think I knew." Stan mumbled. Attention turned from Bev to him.

"y-y-y-you knew?!"

"sorta?" he spoke a little more clearly. "animals eat away from their resting places so they won't be found. There's only one reason they start hoarding food around the nest. A need to feed something that cant get food on its own."

"why didn't you s-s-s-say anything?!"

"I didn't think it would matter. IT was dying. In the end it didn't since Bev says the eggs are rotten now." shrugging without knowing what else to do.

"*IT* adopted you because the eggs died?" Ben bringing the conversation back around.

"animals are more likely to adopt other young if their young recently died." Stan answered for Beverly on the subject.

"yeah. That's what I guessed." she gestured to Stan.

"why does Bev get to be the killer clowns golden child? Lucky bastard." Richie getting a light smack on the arm from Eddie.

"we can talk more about this later. Let's get the quarry!" Bev heading out.

"*IT* said we had to stay!" Eddie shouted.

"*ITs* not the boss of me!" she shouted back. Seeing she wasn't going to stop the rest of them followed. Squeezing back into Mike's car to drive down to the quarry. Heading straight for the broken down offices placed around.

"that's the only pile of r-r-r-rubble around here." bill pointed to a large heap behind one of the large offices.

"how do they move it? It all must weigh a ton!" Richie spoke as they stopped the car.

"he did say it was fake." Mike reminded as they walked up to the pile.

Richie running up ahead to the large pile. "looks pretty real to me." hitting one rock with a light kick. The rock letting off a crunch as it split in half. The rocks insides showing it to be a carefully painted Styrofoam. Kicking a few more showing the same.

"stop before somebody hears you!" Eddie whispered to stop Richie from kicking another false rock. Bill stepping over to pick up one

feeling something heavy attached below. Everyone stepped in to help pull the "rubble" up.

"pfft, looks like a weird theater background." Richie commented. The fake rocks attached to a hidden chain link fence making up the pile.

"no wonder we couldn't find it. They did a lot of work to cover this place." Stan looked over the hidden entrance. Letting others pass by him to lead inward.

"keep your voices low. We're only going in to save the kids then get out." Beverly looked back to them all. The group freezing at a loud boom shaking the earth underneath them.

"what was that?!" Eddie asked.

"sounds like a demolition down the tunnel." Ben answered. "we have to be extra careful of a cave in."

"he also mentioned the tunnel almost being done. They must be hiding the kids here until the tunnel is finished." Mike looked around as they went forward.

"thanks captain obvious." Richie rolled his eyes.

"what I meant is that if the tunnel is finished today those kids will be gone forever. No one will hear us or them yelling. Or even the loud trucks driving in and out with them. Nobody's been hearing the demolition they've been doing for like a week now. This tunnel will turn into a direct hidden line to smuggle out kids all day and night."

"l-l-less talking m-m-more hurrying!" bill rushing forward a bit faster down the tunnels.

"we should go slow!" Ben urged as he ran up behind bill. The group stopping at another earth rattling boom. Pausing in case any rocks fell off the roof from the quake. Slow steps turning back into a walk. Bill stopping at a corner edge. Signaling the others to stop, stay quiet, and to carefully approach the corner. Bill backing up to allow others a chance to peek around the corner.

A large carved out room filled with a line of semi trucks by another

large line up of metal barred cages. Filled with sorrowful kids neglected. Half of them emaciated, some who were crying being used in torturous sport fighting. Groups of men taking bets on the fighting. Most working on breaking a large wall down using pounds of dynamite.

They all flinched back when a man walked a little too close in passing by. "all the payments accounted for?" the man shouted toward the group organizing the sport fights.

"yeeep. The last of the vans received the cash payments in the night." another answered.

"are all the kids sold?"

"all of them. They're being sold faster then we can restock. Soon as the tunnels finished we can ship them all off to the traders."

"oh man." Richie mumbled. "what should we do?" Their attention pulled by loud gunshots and screaming down a branching tunnel. The men's attentions being caught as well to stare to the other tunnel.

One asking "what was that?" some branching off in a group to go investigate. Kids bloody from fighting locked back into their overcrowded cages like cattle. The rest of the men back to demolition.

"now or never." Ben pointed to the cages being clear of guards. Beverly nodded before swiftly moving into the large room behind the line up of semis. The losers following behind one by one. They navigated their way over to the cages. Beverly going up to one needing to shush all the kids begging for help. All the children being under or barely the age of 13 making it harder for them to quiet down. Almost getting caught when their new found desperate crying annoying the men by the wall.

"shut up!" a few of them shouted down the way. Scaring the kids into being silent.

"these locks are fucking thicker then the schools shitty gravy!" Richie whispered as he looked over the silver hanging.

"Richie!" the other losers snapped at him. for using such language in front of a mass group of really young kids.

"where's the key?" Beverly gently asked the children. Getting the answer she hoped she wouldn't. That one of the men had it on them.

"I have to go find Pennywise. He'll help me get the key." looking to the others.

"you need any help?" Eddie offered.

"no, you all try other ways to get them free. I don't plan on taking long, but that could change." sneaking off down the tunnel to follow the same path of the armed men.

Slowing her steps in the darkened place. Calming her breath to something unnoticeable while sneaking. Realizing how easily she could get lost in these dark tunnels. So many branching paths with the carved walls all looking the same. No equipment or signs that could point toward the entrance. The silence of the tunnels being the worst. Jumping at the screams blaring out further forward. Gun shots ringing scaring her into ducking down around a corner.

When the sounds stopped she peeked around the dark wall. Keeping a hand on it to have some sense of from where she was walking to where she was heading. Tempted to call out pennywise's name, but with all the armed men around it was decided against doing. The sound of scratching gravel being stepped on whipping her head around.

Seeing the silhouette of an armed man, that had not spotted her yet, in the darkness. His breathing heavy through his panic. Speckles of red blood shining in the minor light reflecting down along the white tunnel walls. Shining his flashlight around to desperately get sight of something. A wave of it flashing over Beverly having her flinch back. Unintentionally attracting the unwanted attention directly onto her. The bright light shining spot light locking onto her.

"who are you?!" the man questioned. Beverly locked up against the wall when his loaded gun was pointed at her. Too afraid to answer his question.

He stepped forward, hand reaching out to grab her. A roar of open jaws rowed with teeth dropping down from the roof ending his actions. In one swift motion the man was crushed in the mighty jaws. Swallowed down without a chance to be chewed. IT turning its attention toward her seconds after swallowing down a whole human.

"what did I tell you?!" ready to scold her already.

"I know, I know, but I couldn't sit by. we need to get the kids out, but one of the men have the key to all the locks." pushing the conversation.

"ugh! Child, you'll be the death of me! Leave this place before you're injured!"

"no! Please, let me help!"

"I will not allow you to die after I have lost so many from my decisions!"

"I am not here because of your decisions! I am here for mine! I want to help!"

"it'll be my decision to let you stay or not! And I will not!"

"how will you handle all the kids? They'll flee at the sight of you! I can lead them out in that case I don't want to deal with the men! I'll leave, but let me lead the kids out to!"

the large insect growled something to itself. Clacking teeth out of frustration that his child was causing. Snorting when coming down to some conclusion. "I have not seen keys on any of these men. They look to be only the armed guards." waving its head in a gesture to the space around him. "are all your friends here as well?"

happily answer as he allowed her to help. "yes, they're trying to find other ways to break the locks!"

"hmm, I can cause a distraction and break the locks. While you all lead the children out." suggesting a plan.

"that'd be perfect!"

"first you head back to your friends, be careful, and wait for me. I'll create a distraction first to lead all the men away. Giving you all the freedom to move. Then I'll free the locks. From there you should all make a clean run for it."

"okay, will you be okay?"

"I will be fine, child. I do not crumple so easily in this form and these tunnels may as well be my playground. Now go off before they finish the tunnel demolition." gesturing its head back toward the way she came. Twisting around on itself to disappear upwards into the black tunnels. Beverly turning to hurry down the tunnel she was directed. Slowing down to sneak back by the men to where the guys were hiding.

"found the key?" Ben asked

"no, I assume you guys couldn't break the locks either?" seeing the lack of kids free from their cages.

"no." Ben answered with everybody behind shaking their heads.

"even though I didn't find the key I spoke with IT. He'll cause a distraction for us and unlock the cages. While the men go after him we can all leave together." repeating back the plan. They waited until the men weren't looking there way. Spreading out to each of the cage gates in readying to open the doors.

The far off screaming between bullets flying had died off. The men who stayed back nervously pacing from the quiet. Many calling over radios for some kind of answer. Receiving only noisy static to answer their calls. One splintering off from the group to gaze down the pitch black tunnel. Shouting a few names down into the void. He turned back to look at his teammates for an answer on what to do. They looked between each other and shrugged.

Jolting to look forward as their team member was snatched by a large creature to be dragged away. Leaving behind a bloody smear for them to run after. The men fully distracted away had the iron bar locks snapping open for the losers to undo.

Rattling chains to untie them from around the barred doors. Opening them had children flooding out in a panic. Forcing Beverly and her friends to quickly round up the kids before any of them ran down the wrong tunnels. Mike figuring out a way to round up kids in little herds with at least one of them in charge of the small groups. Each working to rush along the mass group of kids down tunnels. Younger kids needing more coaxing to head down the dark tunnels. Needing to stop the whole group to get some kids to continue.

It was only a matter of time before the men realized something was wrong. They had returned to discover the children all missing. Following the massive crying echoing down the main tunnel.

"hey! Where are you going?!" surrounding the large group. Guns pointing threateningly at them all. One being so thrilled to shut the kids up by shooting near their feet. Scaring them back the way they came. The 7 oldest looking to one another on what to do.

The men's attention turned on the obvious older ones. "these older kids ain't ours. Should we sell them next?"

"the girl, yes. Kill the rest, they won't be worth much and will be a pain to sell with how old they are." the men startled back by ITs appearance holding crooked rows of bared teeth at them.

Letting out a furious hiss. "how dare you!" aggressively approaching. The men took a couple shot off against ITs approach. The bullets crumpling against its hardened scales to drop to the dirt floor in small piles. A lunge ended up with one man crushed instantly to bloody mush. A clawed hand crushing down another with the last smashed into the wall by ITs mighty tail. Leaving the body sticking to the stone wall.

The losers heavily working to keep the kids calm at the terrifying scene of death. Settling to have the kids run fearfully past toward the only exit outside. It was the better option over them running back to be lost in more tunnels branching off. Mike running ahead to corral them outside where they would calm down under the bright sun.

free of the dark tunnels they regrouped the kids. Calming them as best they could after the events inside. Not letting any child run off to

be harmed in the quarry. Sitting them all down to rest their tears away. The losers grouping together for a short meeting.

"w-w-walk them back to town now?"

Beverly taking a breath she hadn't been able to this past half hour. "only thing left. Straight to the police office. They'll take them all from there and call the families."

"thank god." Richie praised toward the sky.

"think they can give us excused from school slip?" Eddies worry's springing up.

"who cares about that! We're gonna be on the news as heroes of Derry!" hugging the worried boy.

"kids first guys." Beverly turned them back to rounding up kids. Managing down the long thin pathways in small groups at a time. Helping one another to keep kids away from the steep drops. The long walk to town seeming longer as the kids were exhausted.

"I don't think some of these kids can go any farther." Mike brought up to bill and Beverly. Both agreeing at seeing how bad the health of some kids were. Leaving mike, Stanley, and Eddie to watch over half the kids too sick to continue. The rest walking onward to the town, happy to discover a ranger station half way on their exhausting walk. Police were called to meet at the station. Some rangers taking cars to pick up the other children in groups.

Parents arriving after getting calls while others rushed over without needing one in hopes of finding their lost children. News stations soon grabbing people left and right for interviews. Richie eating up all the attention as he hugged Eddie in the spotlight. The boy waving "hi mom" into the camera with a puff of an inhaler. Ben shyly standing with Stan as they were talked with. Bill and miked interviewed by another news crew. Meanwhile in all the fluster Beverly slipped off from the chaotic crowd.

Wanting to check on someone else without cameras following her. Following the river glittering under the noon sun. seeing clearly

through the water straight down to the sands below. Leading up to the drainage pipe she knew now as almost a 2nd home. Traversing to the inner core right up to the nest that was once a grave for children like her.

Happy to see he was there by his tail going outside the wagon. Her happy visitation to talk over what happened faltering at hearing him wheeze. Stepping into the inner nest quietly around to check on the poor creature.

"pen, are you okay?" asking gently to the wheezing insect.

"I am fine, child." he wheezed.

"... do you need more food? … you have to go? ..."

"yes … I've been awake for far too long."

"will you be okay? Are you sure the men didn't hurt you? I can-" checking over him for any injuries.

"no, there is nothing. I am fine, it is simply time to rest." raising its face up to hers. Being brought into a tight hug by the young girl holding back tears.

"I am actually going to miss you." sniffling back her tears. "I'll make sure to visit after 27 years." chuckling with him.

"that is quite a time for you child, but I'll happily wait for that day."

"should I have the guys visit to?" laughing at the sour expression he gave.

"I shall say, they are more of a … tolerance for me."

"okay, solo visit first then." gently patting the end of his snout.

"stay safe, and don't get into anymore trouble." pressing its face against hers for another hug.

"no promises." she chuckled through her tears giving one last tight hug goodbye. Leaving for IT to enter its long needed hibernation.

Assuming where the guys could be she went straight to the main police station in town. Right as she joined up with the guys they were all swarmed again by news stations. Taking the opportunity to grab another interview not yet recorded. The reporters shooed off by police to give the young kids privacy after all they've been through.

"police checked the q-q-quarry. All the men died in rocks slides o-o-o-or cave collapses." bill caught her up on the "story". "w-w-where did you go?"

"check on Pennywise over what happened. I caught him right before his hibernation would start."

"he's gone?"

"for now."

"hey, did you hear?!" Richie barged into the conversation. "they're giving us medals for action, or some shit like that!" he excitedly told.

"come over here! They want to grab a group photo!" Stanley waved for them to come over. Directed along by some officers on where to stand among the group for the large photo. One that would be posted in all papers on how a lucky 7 broke the curse of children going missing in Derry.